THE

REASONABLENESS

OF

Christianity,

As delivered in the

SCRIPTURES.

LONDON:

Printed for *Awnsham* and *John Churchil*, at the *Black Swan* in *Pater-Noster-Row.* 1695.

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THE PREFACE.

THE little Satisfaction and Consistency is to be found in most of the Systems of Divinity I have met with, made me betake my self to the sole Reading of the Scripture (to which they all appeal) for the understanding the Christian Religion. What from thence by an attentive and unbiassed search I have received, Reader, I here deliver to thee. If by this my Labour thou receivest any Light or Confirmation in the Truth, joyn with me in Thanks

to the Father of Lights for his Condeſcention to our Underſtandings. If upon a fair and unprejudiced Examination, thou findeſt I have miſtaken the Senſe and Tenor of the Goſpel, I beſeech thee, as a true Chriſtian, in the Spirit of the Goſpel (which is that of Charity) and in the words of Sobriety, ſet me right in the Doctrine of Salvation.

ERRATA.

Page 39. line 22. read on the. p. 62. l. 26. r. *Bethſaida*. p. 63. l. 26. r. little of any thing; p. 64. *ult.* r. it was. p. 65. l. 6. r. them at *Jeruſalem*. *Ibid.* l. 30. r. ing in that place. p. 67. l. 17. r. that remained. p. 69. l. 23. r. *a King*, or rather *Meſſiah the King*. p. 75. l. 6. *dele* theſe. *Ibid.* l. 14. r. nor does. p. 112. l. 4. r. *Bethſaida*. p. 161. l. 21. r. and of. p. 169. l. 20. r. *ainv* preſent World. p. 194. l. 11. r. availed not Devils. p. 217. l. 21. r. In his Sermon in the. p. 263. l. 7. r. before obſerved. p. 264. l. 24. r. cuſtom. p. 271. l. 2. r. apophthegms. *Ibid.* l. 24. r. themſelves; and deduces. p. 282. l. 7. r. No touch of. p. 284. l. 5. r. confuſion. p. 287. l. 17. r. life and. p. 295. l. 22. r. the Apoſtles. p. 303. l. 20. r. Treatiſe? p. 304. l. 4. r. abſtract. *Ibid.* l. 14. read them,

The

The Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures.

THIS obvious to any one who reads the New Testament, that the Doctrine of Redemption, and consequently of the Gospel, is founded upon the Supposition of *Adam*'s Fall. To understand therefore what we are restored to by Jesus Christ, we must consider what the Scripture shews we lost by *Adam*. This I thought worthy of a diligent and unbiassed search: Since I found the two Extreams, that Men run into on this Point, either on the one hand shook the Foundations of all Religion, or on the other made Christianity almost nothing. For whilst some Men would have all *Adam*'s Posterity doomed to Eternal Infinite Punishment for the Transgression of *Adam*, whom Millions had never heard of, and no one had authorized to tran-

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ſact for him, or be his Repreſentative; this ſeemed to others ſo little conſiſtent with the Juſtice or Goodneſs of the Great and Infinite God, that they thought there was no Redemption neceſſary, and conſequently that there was none, rather than admit of it upon a Suppoſition ſo derogatory to the Honour and Attributes of that Infinite Being; and ſo made Jeſus Chriſt nothing but the Reſtorer and Preacher of pure Natural Religion; thereby doing violence to the whole tenor of the New Teſtament. And indeed both ſides will be ſuſpected to have treſpaſſed this way, againſt the written Word of God, by any one, who does but take it to be a Collection of Writings deſigned by God for the Inſtruction of the illiterate bulk of Mankind in the way to Salvation; and therefore generally and in neceſſary points to be underſtood in the plain direct meaning of the words and phraſes, ſuch as they may be ſuppoſed to have had in the mouths of the Speakers, who uſed them according to the Language of that Time and Country wherein they lived, without ſuch learned, artificial,

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and forced ſenſes of them, as are ſought out, and put upon them in moſt of the Syſtems of Divinity, according to the Notions, that each one has been bred up in.

To one that thus unbiaſſed reads the Scriptures, what *Adam* fell from, is viſible, was the ſtate of perfect Obedience, which is called *Juſtice* in the New Teſtament, though the word which in the Original ſignifies *Juſtice*, be tranſlated *Righteouſneſs*: And by this Fall he loſt Paradiſe, wherein was Tranquility and the Tree of Life, *i. e.* he loſt Bliſs and Immortality. The Penalty annexed to the breach of the Law, with the Sentence pronounced by God upon it, ſhew this. The Penalty ſtands thus, *Gen.* II. 17. *In the day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die.* How was this executed? He did eat, but in the day he did eat, he did not actually die, but was turned out of Paradiſe from the Tree of Life, and ſhut out for ever from it, *leſt he ſhould take thereof and live for ever.* This ſhews that the ſtate of Paradiſe was a ſtate of Immortality, of Life without end, which he loſt that very day that he

eat: His Life began from thence to ſhorten, and waſt, and to have an end; and from thence to his actual Death, was but like the time of a Priſoner between the Sentence paſt and the Execution, which was in view and certain. Death then enter'd and ſhewed his Face, which before was ſhut out, and not known. So St. *Paul*, *Rom.* V. 12. *By one man ſin entred into the world, and death by ſin*; *i. e.* a ſtate of Death and Mortality: And 1 *Cor.* XV. 22. *In Adam all die*; *i. e.* by reaſon of his Tranſgreſſion all Men are Mortal, and come to die.

This is ſo clear in theſe cited places, and ſo much the current of the New Teſtament, that no body can deny, but that the Doctrine of the Goſpel is, that Death came on all Men by *Adam*'s ſin; only they differ about the ſignification of the word *Death*. For ſome will have it to be a ſtate of Guilt, wherein not only he, but all his Poſterity was ſo involved, that every one deſcended of him deſerved endleſs torment in Hell-fire. I ſhall ſay nothing more here how far, in the apprehenſions of Men, this conſiſts with the Juſtice and

and Goodneſs of God, having mentioned it above: But it ſeems a ſtrange way of underſtanding a Law, which requires the plaineſt and directeſt words, that by *Death* ſhould be meant Eternal Life in Miſery. Could any one be ſuppoſed by a Law, that ſays, *For Felony you ſhall die*, not that he ſhould loſe his Life, but be kept alive in perpetual exquiſite Torments? And would any one think himſelf fairly dealt with, that was ſo uſed?

To this they would have it be alſo a ſtate of neceſſary ſinning, and provoking God in every Action that men do: A yet harder ſenſe of the word *Death* than the other. God ſays, *That in the day that thou eateſt of* the forbidden Fruit, *thou ſhalt die*; *i.e.* thou and thy Poſterity ſhall be ever after uncapable of doing any thing, but what ſhall be ſinful and provoking to me, and ſhall juſtly deſerve my wrath and indignation. Could a worthy man be ſuppoſed to put ſuch terms upon the Obedience of his Subjects, much leſs can the Righteous God be ſuppoſed, as a Puniſhment of one ſin wherewith he is diſpleaſed, to put Man under a ne-

ceſſity of ſinning continually, and ſo multiplying the Provocation? The reaſon of this ſtrange Interpretation we ſhall perhaps find in ſome miſtaken places of the New Teſtament. I muſt confeſs by *Death* here I can underſtand nothing but a ceaſing to be, the loſing of all actions of Life and Senſe. Such a Death came on *Adam*, and all his Poſterity by his firſt Diſobedience in Paradiſe, under which *Death* they ſhould have lain for ever, had it not been for the Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt. If by *Death* threatned to *Adam* were meant the Corruption of Humane Nature in his Poſterity, 'tis ſtrange that the New Teſtament ſhould not any where take notice of it, and tell us, that Corruption ſeized on all becauſe of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, as well as it tells us ſo of *Death*. But as I remember every ones ſin is charged upon himſelf only.

Another part of the Sentence was, *Curſed is the ground for thy ſake; in ſorrow ſhalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life, in the ſweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: For out of it waſt thou taken; Duſt thou art, and to duſt ſhalt thou*

thou return. This ſhews that Paradiſe was a place of Bliſs as well as Immortality, without toyl, and without ſorrow. But when Man was turned out, he was expoſed to the toyl, anxiety, and frailties of this Mortal Life, which ſhould end in the *Duſt*, out of which he was made, and to which he ſhould return; and then have no more life or ſenſe than the *Duſt* had, out of which he was made. Gen. III. 17—19.

As *Adam* was turned out of *Paradiſe*, ſo all his Poſterity were born out of it, out of the reach of the Tree of Life, All like their Father *Adam* in a ſtate of Mortality, void of the Tranquility and Bliſs of *Paradiſe*. Rom. V. 12. *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin.* But here will occur the common Objection, that ſo many ſtumble at: How doth it conſiſt with the Juſtice and Goodneſs of God, that the Poſterity of *Adam* ſhould ſuffer for his ſin; the Innocent be puniſhed for the Guilty? Very well, if keeping one from what he has no right to be called a *Puniſhment*. The ſtate of Immortality in Paradiſe is not due to the Poſterity of *Adam* more than to any

other Creature. Nay, if God afford them a Temporary Mortal Life, 'tis his Gift, they owe it to his Bounty, they could not claim it as their Right, nor does he injure them when he takes it from them. Had he taken from Mankind any thing, that was their Right; or did he put Men in a ſtate of Miſery worſe than not being without any fault or demerit of their own; this indeed would be hard to reconcile with the Notion we have of Juſtice, and much more with the Goodneſs and other Attributes of the Supream Being, which he has declared of himſelf, and Reaſon as well as Revelation muſt acknowledge to be in him; unleſs we will confound Good and Evil, God and Satan. That ſuch a ſtate of extream irremidiable Torment is worſe than no Being at all, if every one's own ſenſe did not determine againſt the vain Philoſophy, and fooliſh Metaphyſicks of ſome Men; yet our Saviour's peremptory deciſion, *Matt.* XXVI. 24. has put it paſt doubt, that one may be in ſuch an eſtate, that it had been *better for him not to have been born.* But that ſuch a temporary Life as we now have,

have, with all its Frailties and ordinary Miſeries is better than no Being, is evident by the high value we put upon it our ſelves. And therefore though *all die in Adam*, yet none are truly *puniſhed* but for their own deeds. *Rom.* II. 6. *God will render to every one*, how? *according to his deeds. To thoſe that obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil*, v. 9. 2 Cor. V. 10. *We muſt appear before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad.* And Chriſt himſelf, who knew for what he ſhould condemn Men at the laſt day, aſſures us in the two places where he deſcribes his proceeding at the great Judgment, that the Sentence of Condemnation paſſes only on the *workers of Iniquity*, ſuch as neglected to fulfil the Law in acts of Charity, *Mat.* VII. 23. *Luke* XIII. 27. *Mat.* XXV. 42. But here is no Condemnation of any one, for what his fore-father *Adam* had done, which 'tis not likely ſhould have been omitted, if that ſhould have been a cauſe, why

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any one was adjudged to the *fire* with the *Devil and his Angels*. And he tells his Diſciples, that when he comes again with his Angels in the Glory of his Father, *that then he will render to every one according to his works*, Mat. XVI. 27.

Adam being thus turned out of Paradiſe, and all his Poſterity born out of it, the conſequence of it was, that all men ſhould die, and remain under Death for ever, and ſo be utterly loſt.

From this eſtate of Death Jeſus Chriſt reſtores all mankind to Life; 1 *Cor.* XV. 22. *As in* Adam *all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.* How this ſhall be, the ſame Apoſtle tells us in the foregoing *v.* 21. *By man death came, by man alſo came the Reſurrection from the dead.* Whereby it appears, that the Life, which Jeſus Chriſt reſtores to all men, is that Life, which they receive again at the Reſurrection. Then they recovered from Death, which otherwiſe all mankind ſhould have continued under loſt for ever, as appears by St. *Paul's* Arguing, 1 *Cor.* XV. concerning the Reſurrection.

And thus men are by the Second

Adam

Adam reſtored to Life again: That ſo by *Adam*'s ſin they may none of them loſe any thing, which by their own Righteouſneſs they might have a Title to. For Righteouſneſs, or an exact obedience to the Law, ſeems by the Scripture to have a claim of Right to Eternal Life, *Rom.* IV. 4. *To him that worketh*; *i.e.* does the works of the Law, *is the reward not reckoned of Grace, but* OF DEBT. And *Rev.* XXII. 14. *Bleſſed are they who do his Commandments, that they may* HAVE RIGHT *to the Tree of Life, which is in the Paradiſe of God.* If any of the Poſterity of *Adam* were juſt, they ſhall not loſe the Reward of it, Eternal Life and Bliſs, by being his Mortal Iſſue: Chriſt will bring them all to Life again; And then they ſhall be put every one upon his own Tryal, and receive Judgment, as he is found to be Righteous or no. And *the righteous*, as our Saviour ſays, *Mat.* XXV. 46. *ſhall go into eternal life.* Nor ſhall any one miſs it, who has done what our Saviour directed the Lawyer, who asked, *Luke* X. 25. *What he ſhould do to inherit eternal life? Do this*, *i. e.* what is required by the Law, *and thou ſhalt live.*

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On the other ſide, it ſeems the unalterable purpoſe of the Divine Juſtice, that no unrighteous Perſon, no one that is guilty of any breach of the Law, ſhould be in Paradiſe; But that the wages of ſin ſhould be to every man, as it was to *Adam*, an Excluſion of him out of that Happy ſtate of Immortality, and bring Death upon him. And this is ſo conformable to the Eternal and eſtabliſhed Law of Right and Wrong, that it is ſpoke of too as if it could not be otherwiſe. St. *James* ſays, *Chap.* I. 15. *Sin when it is finiſhed bringeth forth death*, as it were by a Natural and neceſſary production. *Sin entred into the World, and death by ſin*, ſays St. *Paul*, *Rom.* V. 12. & VI. 23. *The wages of ſin is Death.* Death is the Purchaſe of any, of every ſin. *Gal.* III. 10. *Curſed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* And of this St. *James* gives a Reaſon, *Chap.* II. 10, 11. *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all: For he that ſaid, Do not commit Adultery, ſaid alſo, do not Kill: i. e.* He that offends in any one Point, ſins againſt

againſt the Authority which eſtabliſhed the Law.

Here then we have the ſtanding and fixed meaſures of Life and Death. Immortality and Bliſs belong to the Righteous; Thoſe who have lived in an exact Conformity to the Law of God, are out of the reach of Death: But an Excluſion from Paradiſe, and loſs of Immortality, is the Portion of Sinners, of all thoſe who have any way broke that Law, and failed of a Compleat Obedience to it by the guilt of any one Tranſgreſſion. And thus Mankind by the Law are put upon the iſſues of Life or Death; As they are *Righteous*, or *Unrighteous*; *Juſt* or *Unjuſt*; *i. e.* Exact Performers, or Tranſgreſſors of the Law.

But yet *all having ſinned*, Rom. III. 23. *and come ſhort of the glory God*, *i. e.* the Kingdom of God in Heaven, which is often called his Glory, *both Jews and Gentiles*, v. 22. So that *by the deeds of the Law no one could be juſtified*, *v.* 20. it follows, that no one could then have Eternal Life and Bliſs.

Perhaps

Perhaps it will be demanded, Why did God give ſo hard a Law to Mankind, that to the Apoſtles time no one of *Adam's* Iſſue had kept it? As appears by *Rom.* III. and *Gal.* III. 21, 22.

Anſw. It was ſuch a Law as the Purity of God's Nature required, and muſt be the Law of ſuch a Creature as Man, unleſs God would have made him a Rational Creature, and not required him to have lived by the Law of Reaſon, but would have countenanced in him Irregularity and Diſobedience to that Light which he had; and that Rule, which was ſuitable to his Nature: Which would have been, to have authorized Diſorder, Confuſion, and Wickedneſs in his Creatures. For that this Law was the *Law of Reaſon*, or as it is called *of Nature*, we ſhall ſee by and by: And if Rational Creatures will not live up to the Rule of their Reaſon, who ſhall excuſe them? If you will admit them to forſake Reaſon in one point, why not in another? Where will you ſtop? To diſobey God in any part of his Commands (and 'tis he that Commands what Reaſon does) is direct Rebellion; which if diſpenſed with in any

any Point, Government and Order are at an end; And there can be no bounds ſet to the Lawleſs Exorbitancy of unconfined men. *The Law therefore was*, as St. *Paul* tells us, *Rom.* VII. 12, *holy, juſt, and good*, and ſuch as it ought, and could not otherwiſe be.

This then being the caſe, that whoever is guilty of any ſin, ſhould certainly die, and ceaſe to be, the benefit of Life reſtored by Chriſt at the Reſurrection would have been no great Advantage, (for as much as here again Death muſt have ſeized upon all mankind, becauſe all had ſinned; For the Wages of Sin is every where Death, as well after as before the Reſurrection) if God had not found out a way to Juſtifie ſome, *i. e.* ſo many, as obeyed another Law, which God gave, which in the New Teſtament is called *the Law of Faith*, Rom. III. 27. and is oppoſed to *the Law of Works*. And therefore the Puniſhment of thoſe who would not follow him was to loſe their Souls, *i. e.* their Lives, *Mark* VIII. 35—38. as is plain, conſidering the occaſion it was ſpoke on.

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The better to underſtand *the Law of Faith*, it will be convenient in the firſt place to conſider *the Law of Works*. *The Law of Works* then, in ſhort, is that Law, which requires perfect Obedience, without any remiſſion or abatement; So that by that Law a man cannot be Juſt, or juſtified without an exact performance of every tittle. Such a perfect Obedience in the New Teſtament is termed δικαιοσύνη, which we tranſlate *Righteouſneſs*.

The Language of this Law is, Do this and live, Tranſgreſs and die. *Lev.* XVIII. 5. *Ye ſhall keep my ſtatutes and my judgments, which if a man do he ſhall live in them.* Ezek. XX. 11. *I gave them my ſtatutes, and ſhewed them my judgments, which if a man do he ſhall even live in them. Moſes*, ſays St. *Paul*, Rom. X. 5. *deſcribeth the righteouſneſs which is of the Law, that the man which doth thoſe things ſhall live in them.* Gal. III. 12. *The Law is not of Faith, but that man that doth them ſhall live in them.* On the other ſide, Tranſgreſs and die; no diſpenſation, no atonement. *V.* 10. *Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things*

things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Where this Law of Works was to be found, the New Teſtament tells us, (*viz.*) in the Law delivered by *Moſes*. *John* I. 17. *The Law was given by* Moſes, *but Faith and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt.* Cap. VII. 19. *Did not Moſes give you the Law*, ſays our Saviour, *and yet none of you keep the Law.* And this is the Law which he ſpeaks of, where he asks the Lawyer, *Luke* X. 26. *What is written in the Law? how readeſt thou?* v. 28. *This do and thou ſhalt live.* This is that which St. *Paul* ſo often ſtiles the *Law*, without any other diſtinction, *Rom.* II. 13. *Not the hearers of the Law are juſt before God, but the doers of the Law are juſtified.* 'Tis needleſs to quote any more places, his Epiſtles are all full of it, eſpecially this to the *Romans.*

But the Law given by *Moſes* being not given to all Mankind, How are all men ſinners; ſince without a Law there is no Tranſgreſſion? To this the Apoſtle, *v.* 14. Anſwers, *For when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do* (*i. e.* find it reaſonable to do) *by nature the*

things contained in the Law; theſe having not the Law, are a Law unto themſelves: Which ſhew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their Conſciences alſo bearing witneſs, and among ſt one another their thoughts accuſing or excuſing. By which, and other places in the following Chapter, 'tis plain, that under the Law of Works is comprehended alſo the Law of Nature, knowable by Reaſon as well as the Law given by *Moſes*. *For*, ſays St. *Paul*, Rom. III. 9. 23. *we have proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under ſin: For all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God:* Which they could not do without a Law.

Nay, whatever God requires any where to be done without making any allowance for Faith, that is a part of the Law of Works. So the forbidding *Adam* to eat of the Tree of Knowledge was part of the Law of Works. Only we muſt take notice here, That ſome of God's Poſitive Commands being for peculiar Ends, and ſuited to particular Circumſtances of Times, Places, and Perſons, have a limited and only temporary Obligation by vertue of God's poſitive

poſitive Injunction; ſuch as was that part of *Moſes*'s Law which concerned the outward Worſhip, or Political Conſtitution of the Jews, and is called the Ceremonial and Judaical Law, in contradiſtinction to the Moral part of it; Which being conformable to the Eternal Law of Right, is of Eternal Obligation, and therefore remains in force ſtill under the Goſpel; nor is abrogated by the *Law of Faith*, as St. *Paul* found ſome ready to infer, *Rom.* III. 31. *Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid; yea, we eſtabliſh the Law.*

Nor can it be otherwiſe: For were there no *Law of Works*, there could be no *Law of Faith*. For there could be no need of Faith, which ſhould be counted to men for Righteouſneſs, if there were no Law to be the Rule and Meaſure of Righteouſneſs, which men failed in their Obedience to. Where there is no Law, there is no Sin; all are Righteous equally with or without Faith.

The Rule therefore of Right is the ſame that ever it was, the Obligation to obſerve it is alſo the ſame: The difference between the *Law of Works* and

the *Law of Faith* is only this; that the *Law of Works* makes no allowance for failing on any occaſion. Thoſe that obey are Righteous, thoſe that in any part diſobey are unrighteous, and muſt not expect Life the Reward of Righteouſneſs. But by the *Law of Faith*, Faith is allowed to ſupply the defect of full Obedience; and ſo the Believers are admitted to Life and Immortality as if they were Righteous. Only here we muſt take notice, that when St. *Paul* ſays, that the Goſpel eſtabliſhes the Law, he means the Moral part of the Law of *Moſes*: For that he could not mean the Ceremonial or Political part of it, is evident by what I quoted out of him juſt now, where he ſays, *The Gentiles that do by nature the things contained in the Law, their Conſciences bearing witneſs.* For the Gentiles neither did nor thought of the Judaical or Ceremonial Inſtitutions of *Moſes*, 'twas only the Moral part their Conſciences were concerned in. As for the reſt, St. *Paul* tells the *Galatians*, *Cap.* IV. they are not under that part of the Law, which *v.* 3. he calls *Elements of the World*; and *v.* 9. *weak and beggarly elements.*

elements. And our Saviour himſelf in his Goſpel-Sermon on the Mount, tells them, *Mat*. V. 17. That whatever they might think, he was not come *to diſſolve the Law*, but to make it more full and ſtrict: For that that is meant by πληρῶσαι is evident from the following part of that Chapter, where he gives the Precepts in a ſtricter ſenſe than they were received in before. But they are all Precepts of the Moral Law which he reinforces. What ſhould become of the Ritual Law he tells the Woman of *Samaria* in theſe words, *John* IV. 21. 23. *The hour cometh when you ſhall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at* Jeruſalem *worſhip the Father. But the true Worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in ſpirit and in truth, for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him.*

Thus then as to the Law in ſhort. The Civil and Ritual part of the Law delivered by *Moſes* obliges not Chriſtians, though to the Jews it were a part of the Law of Works; it being a part of the Law of Nature, that man ought to obey every Poſitive Law of God, whenever he ſhall pleaſe to make any ſuch addition to the Law of his Nature.

But the Moral part of *Moſes*'s Law, or the Moral Law, (which is every where the ſame, the Eternal Rule of Right) obliges Chriſtians and all men every where, and is to all men the ſtanding Law of Works. But Chriſtian Believers have the Priviledge to be under the *Law of Faith* too; which is that Law whereby God Juſtifies a man for Believing, though by his Works he be not Juſt or Righteous, *i.e.* though he came ſhort of Perfect Obedience to the Law of Works. God alone does, or can, Juſtifie or make Juſt thoſe who by their Works are not ſo: Which he doth by counting their Faith for Righteouſneſs, *i.e.* for a compleat performance of the Law. *Rom.* IV. 3. *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteouſneſs.* v. 5. *To him that believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteouſneſs.* v. 6. *Even as* David *alſo deſcribeth the bleſſedneſs of the man unto whom God imputeth righteouſneſs without works; i.e.* without a full meaſure of Works, which is exact Obedience. v. 7. Saying, *Bleſſed are they whoſe iniquities are forgiven, and whoſe ſins are covered.* v. 8. *Bleſſed*

ſed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute ſin.

This Faith for which God juſtified *Abraham*, what was it? It was the believing God when he engaged his Promiſe in the Covenant he made with him. This will be plain to any one who conſiders theſe places together, *Gen.* XV. 6. *He believed in the Lord*, or *believed the Lord*. For that the *Hebrew* Phraſe *believing in*, ſignifies no more but *believing*, is plain from St. *Paul*'s citation of this place, *Rom.* IV. 3. where he repeats it thus: *Abraham believed God*, which he thus explains, *v.* 18—22. *who againſt hope, believed in hope, that he might become the Father of many Nations: According to that which was ſpoken, ſo ſhall thy ſeed be. And being not weak in faith, he conſidered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, nor yet the deadneſs of* Sarah's *womb. He ſtaggered not at the promiſe of God through unbelief; but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God. And being fully perſwaded, that what he had promiſed, he was alſo able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs.*

By which it is clear, that the Faith which God counted to *Abraham* for Righteouſneſs, was nothing but a firm belief of what God declared to him, and a ſteadfaſt relying on him for the accompliſhment of what he had promiſed.

Now this, ſays St. *Paul*, v. 23, 24. *was not writ for his* [Abraham's] *ſake alone*, *But for us alſo*; teaching us, that as *Abraham* was juſtified for his Faith, ſo alſo ours ſhall be accounted to us for Righteouſneſs, if we believe God as *Abraham* believed him. Whereby 'tis plain is meant the firmneſs of our Faith without *ſtaggering*, and not the believing the ſame Propoſitions that *Abraham* believed; *viz.* that though he and *Sarah* were old, and paſt the time and hopes of Children, yet he ſhould have a Son by her, and by him become the Father of a great People, which ſhould poſſeſs the Land of *Canaan*. This was what *Abraham* believed, and was counted to him for Righteouſneſs. But no body I think will ſay, that any ones believing this now, ſhall be imputed to him for Righteouſneſs. The Law of Faith then, in ſhort, is for every

every one to believe what God requires him to believe, as a condition of the Covenant he makes with him; and not to doubt of the performance of his Promiſes. This the Apoſtle intimates in the cloſe here, *v.* 24. *But for us alſo, to whom it ſhall be imputed, if we believe on him that raiſed up Jeſus our Lord from the dead.* We muſt therefore examine and ſee what God requires us to believe now under the Revelation of the Goſpel: For the belief of one Inviſible, Eternal, Omnipotent God, maker of Heaven and Earth, *&c.* was required before, as well as now.

What we are now required to believe to obtain Eternal Life, is plainly ſet down in the Goſpel. St. *John* tells us, *John* III. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life.* What this *believing on him* is, we are alſo told in the next Chapter. *The woman ſaith unto him, I know that the Meſſiah cometh: When he is come, he will tell us all things. Jeſus ſaid unto her, I that ſpake unto thee am he. The woman then went into the City, and ſaith to the men, come ſee a man that hath told*

told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Meſſiah? And many of the Samaritans *believed on him: for the ſaying of the woman, who teſtified, he told me all that ever I did. So when the* Samaritans *were come unto him, many more believed becauſe of his words, and ſaid to the woman; We believe not any longer becauſe of thy ſaying, for we have heard our ſelves, and we know that this Man is truly the Saviour of the World, the Meſſiah*, John IV. 25, 26. 29. 39, 40, 41, 42.

By which place it is plain, that *believing on the Son* is the *believing that Jeſus was the Meſſiah*; giving Credit to the Miracles he did, and the Profeſſion he made of himſelf. For thoſe who were ſaid to BELIEVE ON HIM for the ſaying of the Woman, *v.* 39. tell the Woman, that they now believed not any longer becauſe of her ſaying; but that having heard him themſelves, they knew, *i. e.* BELIEVED paſt doubt THAT HE WAS THE MESSIAH.

This was the great Propoſition that was then controverted concerning Jeſus of *Nazareth*, whether he was the *Meſſiah*

Meſſiah or no; And the aſſent to that, was that which diſtinguiſhed Believers from Unbelievers. When many of his Diſciples had forſaken him, upon his declaring that he was the Bread of Life which came down from Heaven, *He ſaid to the Apoſtles, will ye alſo go away? Then* Simon Peter *anſwered him; Lord, to whom ſhall we go? Thou haſt the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are ſure thou art the Meſſiah, the Son of the living God*, John VI. 69. This was the Faith which diſtinguiſhed them from Apoſtates and Unbelievers, and was ſufficient to continue them in the rank of Apoſtles: And it was upon the ſame Propoſition, *That Jeſus was the Meſſiah the Son of the living God*, owned by St. *Peter*, that our Saviour ſaid, he would build his Church. *Mat.* XVI. 16—18.

To convince men of this he did his Miracles: And their aſſent to, or not aſſenting to this, made them to be, or not to be of his Church; Believers, or not Believers. *The Jews came round about him, and ſaid unto him, how long doſt thou make us doubt? If thou be the Meſſiah tell us plainly. Jeſus anſwered them,*

them; I told you, and ye believed not: The works that I do in my Father's name they bear witneſs of me. But ye believe not, becauſe ye are not of my ſheep, John X. 24—26. Conformable hereunto St. *John* tells us, *That many deceivers are entred into the world, who confeſs not that Jeſus, the Meſſiah, is come in the fleſh. This is a deceiver, and an Antichriſt, whoſoever abideth not in the Doctrine of the Meſſiah has not God. He that abideth in the Doctrine of the Meſſiah, i. e.* that Jeſus is he, *hath both the Father and the Son,* 2 John 7. 9, 10. That this is the meaning of the place, is plain from what he ſays in his foregoing Epiſtle, *Whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Meſſiah, is born of God,* 1 John V. 1. And therefore drawing to a cloſe of his Goſpel, and ſhewing the end for which he writ it, he has theſe words: *Many other ſigns truly did Jeſus in the preſence of his Diſciples, which are not written in this book; but theſe are written, that ye may believe that Jeſus is the Meſſiah, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name,* John XX. 30, 31. Whereby it is plain, that the Goſpel

was

was writ to induce men into a belief of this Propoſition, *that Jeſus of Nazareth was the Meſſiah*; Which if they believed, they ſhould *have life*.

Accordingly the great Queſtion amongſt the Jews was, whether he were the *Meſſiah* or no: And the great Point inſiſted on and promulgated in the Goſpel was, that he was the *Meſſiah*. The firſt glad tidings of his Birth, brought to the Shepherds by an Angel, was in theſe words: *Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people; For to you is born this day in the City of* David *a Saviour, who is the Meſſiah the Lord*, Luke II. 11. Our Saviour Diſcourſing with *Martha* about the means of attaining Eternal Life, ſaith to her, *John* XI. 27. *Whoſoever believeth in me ſhall never die. Believeſt thou this? She ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Meſſiah, the Son of God, which ſhould come into the world.* This Anſwer of hers ſheweth what it is to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, ſo as to have Eternal Life, *viz.* to believe that he is the *Meſſiah* the Son of God, whoſe coming was foretold by the Prophets.

And

And thus *Andrew* and *Philip* expreſs it: Andrew *ſays to his Brother* Simon, *we have found the Meſſiah, which is, being interpreted, the Chriſt.* Philip *ſaith to* Nathanael, *we have found him of whom* Moſes *in the Law, and the Prophets did write, Jeſus of* Nazareth, *the Son of* Joſeph, *John* I. 41. 45. According to what the Evangeliſt ſays in this place, I have, for the clearer underſtanding of the Scripture, all along put *Meſſiah* for *Chriſt*. *Chriſt* being but the Greek name for the Hebrew *Meſſiah*, and both ſignifying *The Anointed.*

And that he was the *Meſſiah*, was the great Truth he took pains to convince his Diſciples and Apoſtles of; appearing to them after his Reſurrection: As may be ſeen, *Luke* XXIV. which we ſhall more particularly conſider in another place. There we read what Goſpel our Saviour Preach'd to his Diſciples and Apoſtles; And That, as ſoon as he was riſen from the Dead, twice the very day of his Reſurrection.

And if we may gather what was to be believed by all Nations, from what was preached unto them; we may obſerve,

obſerve, that the Preaching of the Apoſtles every where in the *Acts* tended to this one Point, to prove that Jeſus was the *Meſſiah*. Indeed, now after his Death, his Reſurrection was alſo commonly required to be believed as a neceſſary Article, and ſometimes ſolely inſiſted on: It being a mark and undoubted Evidence of his being the *Meſſiah*, and neceſſary now to be believed by thoſe who would receive him as the *Meſſiah*. For ſince the *Meſſiah* was to be a Saviour and a King, and to give Life and a Kingdom to thoſe who received him, as we ſhall ſee by and by, there could have been no Pretence to have given him out for the *Meſſiah*, and to require men to believe him to be ſo, who thought him under the Power of Death, and Corruption of the Grave. And therefore thoſe who believed him to be the *Meſſiah*, muſt believe that he was riſen from the Dead: And thoſe who believed him to be riſen from the Dead, could not doubt of his being the *Meſſiah*. But of this more in another place.

Let us ſee therefore how the Apoſtles preached Chriſt, and what they propo-

propoſed to their Hearers to believe. St. *Peter* at *Jeruſalem*, *Acts* II. by his firſt Sermon, converted Three Thouſand Souls. What *was his word*, which, as we are told, *v.* 41. *they gladly received, and thereupon were baptized?* That may be ſeen from *v.* 22. to *v.* 36. In ſhort this; Which is the Concluſion drawn from all that he had ſaid, and which he preſſes on them as the thing they were to believe, *viz. Therefore let all the Houſe of* Iſrael *know aſſuredly, that God hath made that ſame Jeſus, whom ye have crucified, Lord and Meſſiah*, v. 36.

To the ſame purpoſe was his Diſcourſe to the Jews in the Temple, *Acts* III. the deſign whereof you have, *v.* 18. *But thoſe things that God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his Prophets, that the Meſſiah ſhould ſuffer, he hath ſo fulfilled.*

In the next Chapter *Acts* IV. *Peter* and *John* being examined about the Miracle on the lame Man, profeſs it to have been done in the Name of Jeſus of *Nazareth*, who was the *Meſſiah*, in whom alone there was Salvation, *v.* 10—12. The ſame thing they

they confirm to them again, *Acts* V. 29—32. *And daily in the Temple, and in every Houſe they ceaſed not to teach and preach Jeſus the Meſſiah*, v. 42.

What was *Stephen*'s Speech to the Council, *Acts* VII. but a Reprehenſion to them, that they were the Betrayers and Murderers of the *Juſt One?* Which is the Title by which he plainly deſigns the *Meſſiah*, whoſe coming was foreſhewn by the Prophets, *v.* 51, 52. And that the *Meſſiah* was to be without ſin (which is the import of the word Juſt) was the Opinion of the Jews, appears from *John* IX. *v.* 22. compared with 24.

Acts VIII. *Philip* carries the Goſpel to *Samaria*. *Then* Philip *went down to* Samaria, *and preached to them.* What was it he preached? You have an account of it in this one word, *The Meſſiah*, *v.* 5. This being that alone which was required of them, to believe that *Jeſus* was the *Meſſiah*; which, when they believed, they were baptized. *And when they believed* Philip's *Preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jeſus the Meſſiah, they were baptized both Men and Women*, v. 12.

Philip being ſent from thence, by a ſpecial call of the Spirit, to make an Eminent Convert, out of *Iſaiah* preaches to him Jeſus, *v.* 35. And what it was he preached concerning *Jeſus*, we may know by the Profeſſion of Faith the Eunuch made, upon which he was admitted to Baptiſm. *v.* 37. *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God:* Which is as much as to ſay, I believe that he, whom you call Jeſus Chriſt, is really and truly the *Meſſiah* that was promiſed. For that believing him to be the *Son of God*, and to be the *Meſſiah*, was the ſame thing, may appear by comparing *John* I. 45. with *v.* 49. where *Nathanael* owns Jeſus to be the *Meſſiah* in theſe terms: *Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Iſrael.* So the Jews, *Luke* XXII. 70. asking Chriſt, whether he were the *Son of God*; plainly demand of him, whether he were the *Meſſiah?* Which is evident by comparing that with the three preceding Verſes. They ask him, *v.* 67. whether he were the *Meſſiah?* He anſwers, *If I tell you, you will not believe*; but withal tells them, that from thenceforth he ſhould be in Poſ-

ſeſſion

ſeſſion of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, expreſſed in theſe words, *v.* 69. *Hereafter ſhall the Son of Man ſit on the right hand of the power of God:* Which made them all cry out, *Art thou then the Son of God? i. e.* Doſt thou then own thy ſelf to be the *Meſſiah?* To which he replies; *Ye ſay that I am.* That the *Son of God* was the known Title of the *Meſſiah* at that time amongſt the Jews, we may ſee alſo from what the Jews ſay to *Pilate*, John XIX. 7. *We have a Law, and by our Law he ought to die, becauſe he made himſelf THE SON OF GOD; i. e.* by making himſelf the *Meſſiah*, the Prophet which was to come, but falſely; and therefore he deſerves to die by the Law, *Deut.* XVIII. 20. That this was the common ſignification of *the Son of God*, is farther evident from what the Chief Prieſts, mocking him, ſaid, when he was at the Croſs, *Mat.* XXVII. 42. *He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave: If he be the King of* Iſrael, *let him now come down from the Croſs, and we will believe him. He truſted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he ſaid, I am the SON OF GOD;*

i. e. he ſaid, he was the *Meſſiah*: But 'tis plainly falſe; for if he were, God would deliver him: For the *Meſſiah* is to be King of *Iſrael*, the Saviour of others; but this Man cannot ſave himſelf. The Chief Prieſts mention here the two Titles then in uſe whereby the Jews commonly deſigned the *Meſſiah*, *viz. Son of God*, and *King of Iſrael*. That of *Son of God*, was ſo familiar a compellation of the *Meſſiah*, who was then ſo much expected and talked of, that the *Romans* it ſeems, who lived amongſt them, had learned it; as appears from *v.* 54. *Now when the Centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jeſus, ſaw the Earthquake, and thoſe things that were done, they feared greatly, ſaying, Truly this was the SON OF GOD*; this was that extraordinary Perſon that was looked for.

Acts IX. St. *Paul* exerciſing the Commiſſion to Preach the Goſpel, which he had received in a Miraculous way, *v.* 20. *Straitway preached Chriſt in the Synagogues, that he is the Son of God*; *i. e.* that Jeſus was the *Meſſiah*: For Chriſt in this place is evidently a Proper Name. And that this was it which

Paul

Paul preached, appears from *v* 22. *Saul increaſed the more in ſtrength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in* Damaſcus, *proving that this is the very Chriſt, i. e.* the *Meſſiah.*

Peter, when he came to *Cornelius* at *Ceſarea*; who by a Viſion was ordered to ſend for him, as *Peter* on the other ſide was by a Viſion commanded to go to him; What does he teach him? His whole Diſcourſe, *Acts* X. tends to ſhew what he ſays God commanded the Apoſtles *to Preach unto the People, and to teſtifie; That it is he* [Jeſus] *which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and the dead.* And that it was *to him that all the Prophets give witneſs, that through his name whoſoever believeth in him ſhall have remiſſion of ſins*, v. 42, 43. This is *the Word which God ſent to the Children of* Iſrael; *that WORD which was publiſhed throughout all* Judea, *and began from* Galilee, *after the Baptiſm which* John *preached*, v. 36, 37. And theſe are the *words* which had been promiſed to *Cornelius*, Acts XI. 14. *Whereby he and all his houſe ſhould be ſaved:* Which *words* amount only to thus

much, That *Jeſus was the Meſſiah*, the Saviour that was promiſed. Upon their receiving of this (for this was all was taught them) the Holy Ghoſt fell on them, and they were baptized. 'Tis obſervable here, that the Holy Ghoſt fell on them before they were baptized; which in other places Converts received not till after Baptiſm. The reaſon whereof ſeems to be this; That God by beſtowing on them the Holy Ghoſt, did thus declare from Heaven, that the Gentiles, upon believing *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, ought to be admitted into the Church by Baptiſm as well as the Jews. Whoever reads St. *Peter*'s Defence, *Acts* XI. when he was accuſed by thoſe of the Circumcumciſion, that he had not kept that diſtance which he ought with the uncircumciſed, will be of this Opinion; and ſee by what he ſays, *v.* 15, 16, 17. That this was the ground, and an irreſiſtible Authority to him for doing ſo ſtrange a thing, as it appeared to the Jews (who alone yet were Members of the Chriſtian Church) to admit Gentiles into their Communion, upon their believing. And therefore

St.

St. *Peter*, in the foregoing Chapter, *Acts* X before he would Baptize them, propoſes this Queſtion *to thoſe of the Circumciſion, which came with him, and were aſtoniſhed, becauſe that on the Gentiles alſo was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghoſt: Can any one forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghoſt as well as we?* v. 47. And when ſome of the Sect of the *Phariſees*, who believed, thought *it needful that the converted* Gentiles *ſhould be circumciſed, and keep the Law of Moſes*, Acts XV. Peter *roſe up and ſaid unto them, Men and Brethren, you know that a good while ago God made choice amongſt us, that the Gentiles*, viz. *Cornelius*, and thoſe here converted with him, *by my mouth ſhould hear the Goſpel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the hearts, bear them witneſs, giving them the Holy Ghoſt, even as he did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by Faith*, v. 7—9. So that both Jews and Gentiles, who believed Jeſus to be the *Meſſiah*, received thereupon the Seal of Baptiſm; whereby they were owned to be his, and diſtinguiſhed

from Unbelievers. From what is above-ſaid, we may obſerve, That this Preaching Jeſus to be the *Meſſiah*, is called *the Word*, and *the Word of God*; and believing it, *receiving the Word of God*. *Vid.* Acts X. 36, 37. & XI. 1. 19, 20. And *the Word of the Goſpel*, Acts XV. 7. And ſo likewiſe in the Hiſtory of the Goſpel, what *Mark*, Chap. IV. 14, 15. calls ſimply the *Word*, St. *Luke* calls *the Word of God*, *Luke* VIII. 11. And St. *Matthew*, *Chap.* XIII. 19. *the Word of the Kingdom*; which were, it ſeems, in the Goſpel-writers Synonymous terms, and are ſo to be underſtood by us.

But to go on: *Acts* XIII. *Paul* Preaches in the Synagogue at *Antioch*, where he makes it his buſineſs to convince the Jews, that *God, according to his promiſe, had of the ſeed of* David *raiſed to* Iſrael *a Saviour, Jeſus*, v. 24. That he was *He* of whom the Prophets writ, *v* 25—29. *i. e.* the *Meſſiah*: And that as a demonſtration of his being ſo, God had raiſed him from the Dead, *v.* 30. From whence he argues thus, *v.* 32, 33. *We Evangelize to you*, or bring you this Goſpel, *how that the Promiſe which was made*

to

to our Fathers, God hath fulfilled the ſame unto us, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again; as it is alſo written in the ſecond Pſalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And having gone on to prove him to be the *Meſſiah*, by his Reſurrection from the Dead, he makes this Concluſion; *v.* 38, 39. *Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you forgiveneſs of ſins; and by him all who believe are juſtified from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the Law of* Moſes. This is in this Chapter called *the Word of God* over and over again: Compare *v.* 42. with 44. 46. 48, 49. And *Chap.* XII. *v.* 24.

Acts XVII. 2—4. At *Theſſalonica*, *Paul, as his manner was, went into the Synagogue, and three Sabbath-days reaſoned with the Jews out of the Scriptures; opening and alledging, that the* Meſſiah *muſt needs have ſuffered, and riſen again from the dead: And that this Jeſus, whom I preach unto you, is the* Meſſiah. *And ſome of them believed, and conſorted with* Paul *and* Silas: *But the Jews which believed not, ſet the*

the City in an uproar. Can there be any thing plainer, than that the aſſenting to this Propoſition, that Jeſus was the *Meſſiah*, was that which diſtinguiſhed the Believers from the Unbelievers? For this was that alone which, three Sabbaths, *Paul* endeavoured to convince them of, as the Text tells us in direct words.

From thence he went to *Berea*, and preached the ſame thing: And the *Bereans* are commended, *v.* 11. for ſearching the Scriptures, whether thoſe things, *i. e.* which he had ſaid, *v.* 2, 3. concerning Jeſus his being the *Meſſiah*, were true or no.

The ſame Doctrine we find him Preaching at *Corinth*, *Acts* XVIII. 4—6. *And he reaſoned in the Synagogue every Sabbath, and perſwaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when* Silas *and* Timotheus *were come from* Macedonia, Paul *was preſſed in ſpirit, and teſtified to the Jews, that Jeſus was the* Meſſiah. *And when they oppoſed themſelves, and blaſphemed, he ſhook his raiment, and ſaid unto them, your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Greeks.*

Upon

Upon the like occaſion he tells the Jews at *Antioch*, *Acts* XIII.46. *It was neceſſary that the Word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken to you: But ſeeing you put it off from you, we turn to the Gentiles.* 'Tis plain here, St. *Paul*'s charging their Blood on their own heads, is for oppoſing this ſingle Truth, that *Jeſus* was the *Meſſiah*; that Salvation or Perdition depends upon believing or rejecting this one Propoſition. I mean, this is all is required to be believed by thoſe who acknowledge but one Eternal and Inviſible God, the maker of Heaven and Earth, as the Jews did. For that there is ſomething more required to Salvation, beſides believing, we ſhall ſee hereafter. In the mean time, it is fit here on this occaſion to take notice, that though the Apoſtles in their Preaching to the Jews, and the *Devout*, (as we tranſlate the word Σεβόμενοι, who were Proſelytes of the Gate, and the worſhippers of one Eternal and Inviſible God,) ſaid nothing of the believing in this one true God, the maker of Heaven and Earth; becauſe it was needleſs to preſs this to thoſe who believed and profeſſed it already

already (for to ſuch, 'tis plain, were moſt of their Diſcourſes hitherto) Yet when they had to do with Idolatrous Heathens, who were not yet come to the knowledge of the one only true God; they began with that, as neceſſary to be believed; it being the Foundation on which the other was built, and without which it could ſignifie nothing.

Thus *Paul* ſpeaking to the Idolatrous *Lyſtrians*, who would have ſacrificed to him and *Barnabas*, ſays, *Acts* XIV. 15. *We Preach unto you, that you ſhould turn from theſe vanities unto the living God, who made Heaven, and Earth, and the Sea, and all things that are therein. Who in times paſt ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheleſs he left not himſelf without witneſs in that he did good, and gave us rain from Heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs.*

Thus alſo he proceeded with the Idolatrous *Athenians*, *Acts* XVII. Telling them, upon occaſion of the Altar dedicated to the unknown God, *Whom ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you;*

you; God who made the World, and all things therein: Seeing that he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in Temples made with hands.—Foraſmuch then as we are the Off-ſpring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto Gold, or Silver, or Stone, graven by art, and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; But now commandeth all men every where to repent: Becauſe he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained: Whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead. So that we ſee, where any thing more was neceſſary to be propoſed to be believed, as there was to the Heathen Idolaters, there the Apoſtles were careful not to omit it.

Acts XVIII. 4. *Paul* at *Corinth reaſoned in the Synagogue every Sabbath-day, and teſtified to the Jews, that Jeſus was the* Meſſiah. *Ver.* 11. *And he continued there a year and ſix months, teaching the Word of God amongſt them*; *i. e.* The good News, that Jeſus was the

the *Meſſiah*; as we have already ſhewn is meant by the *Word of God.*

Apollos, another Preacher of the Goſpel, when he was inſtructed in the way of God more perfectly, what did he teach but this ſame Doctrine? As we may ſee in this account of him, *Acts* XVIII. 27. That *when he was come into* Achaia, *he helped the Bretbren much who had believed through grace. For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, ſhewing by the Scriptures that Jeſus was the* Meſſiah.

St. *Paul*, in the Account he gives of himſelf before *Feſtus* and *Agrippa*, profeſſes this alone to be the Doctrine he taught after his Converſion: For, ſays he, *Acts* XXVI. 22. *Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witneſſing both to ſmall and great, ſaying none other things than thoſe which the Prophets and* Moſes *did ſay ſhould come: That the* Meſſias *ſhould ſuffer, and that he ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe from the dead, and ſhould ſhew light unto the People, and to the Gentiles.* Which was no more than to prove that Jeſus was the *Meſſiah.* This is that, which, as we have above obſerved, is called the

the *Word of God*; *Acts* XI. 1. compared with the foregoing Chapter, from *v.* 34. to the end. And XIII. 42. compared with 44. 46. 48, 49. And XVII. 13. compared with *v.* 11. 3. It is alſo called *the Word of the Goſpel*, *Acts* XV. 7. And this is that *Word of God*, and that *Goſpel*, which, wherever their Diſcourſes are ſet down, we find the Apoſtles preached; and was that Faith, which made both Jews and Gentiles Believers and Members of the Church of Chriſt; purifying their hearts, *Acts* XV. 9. And carrying with it Remiſſion of ſins, *Acts* X. 43. So that all that was to be believed for Juſtification, was no more but this ſingle Propoſition; That *Jeſus of* Nazareth *was the Chriſt, or the Meſſiah.* All, I ſay, that was to be believed for Juſtification: For that it was not all that was required to be done for Juſtification, we ſhall ſee hereafter.

Though we have ſeen above from what our Saviour has pronounced himſelf, *John* III. 36. *That he that believeth on the Son, hath everlaſting life; and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth*

deth on him; And are taught from *John* IV. 39. compared with *v.* 42. *That believing on him, is believing that he is the* Meſſiah, *the Saviour of the World*; And the Confeſſion made by St. *Peter*, *Mat.* XVI. 16. That he is *the Meſſiah, the Son of the living God*, being the Rock, on which our Saviour has promiſed to build his Church; Though this, I ſay, and what elſe we have already taken notice of, be enough to convince us what it is we are in the Goſpel required to believe to Eternal Life, without adding what we have obſerved from the Preaching of the Apoſtles; Yet it may not be amiſs, for the farther clearing this matter, to obſerve what the Evangeliſts deliver concerning the ſame thing, though in different words; Which therefore perhaps are not ſo generally taken notice of to this purpoſe.

We have above obſerved, from the words of *Andrew* and *Philip* compared, That the *Meſſiah*, and *him of whom* Moſes *in the Law and the Prophets did write*, ſignifie the ſame thing. We ſhall now conſider that place, *John* I. a little further. *Ver.* 41. *Andrew* ſays to *Simon*,

Simon, We have found the Meſſiah. Philip, on the ſame occaſion, *v.* 45. *ſays to* Nathanael, *We have found him, of whom* Moſes *in the Law and the Prophets did write, Jeſus of* Nazareth, *the Son of* Joſeph. *Nathanael*, who diſbelieved this, when upon Chriſt's ſpeaking to him, he was convinced of it, declares his aſſent to it in theſe words; *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Iſrael.* From which it is evident, that to believe him to be *Him of whom* Moſes *and the Prophets did write*, or to be the *Son of God*, or to be the *King of Iſrael*, was in effect the ſame as to believe him to be the *Meſſiah*: And an aſſent to that, was what our Saviour received for believing. For upon *Nathanael*'s making a Confeſſion in theſe words, *Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Iſrael*; *Jeſus anſwered and ſaid to him, Becauſe I ſaid to thee, I ſaw thee under the Fig-tree, doſt thou* BELIEVE? *Thou ſhalt ſee greater things than theſe*, v. 51. I deſire any one to read the latter part of the firſt of *John*, from *v.* 25. with attention, and tell me, whether it be not plain, that this Phraſe, *The Son of*

God, is an Expreſſion uſed for the *Meſſiah*. To which let him add *Martha's* declaration of her Faith, *John* XI. 27. in theſe words; *I believe that thou art the Meſſiah, THE SON OF GOD, who ſhould come into the World*; And that paſſage of St. *John, Chap.* XX. 31. *That ye might believe that Jeſus is the Meſſiah, THE SON OF GOD; and that believing, ye might have life through his name*: And then tell me whether he can doubt that *Meſſiah* and *Son of God* were Synonymous terms, at that time, amongſt the Jews.

The Prophecy of *Daniel, Chap.* IX. where he is called *Meſſiah the Prince*; And the mention of his Government and Kingdom, and the deliverance by him, in *Iſaiah*, *Daniel*, and other Propheſies, underſtood of the *Meſſiah*; were ſo well known to the Jews, and had ſo raiſed their hopes of him about this time, which by their account was to be the time of his coming to reſtore the Kingdom to *Iſrael*, That *Herod* no ſooner heard of the *Magi's* enquiry after *him that was born King of the Jews*, *Mat.* II. But he forthwith *demanded of the chief Prieſts and Scribes, where the Meſſiah*

Meſſiah ſhould be born, v. 4. Not doubting, but if there were any King born to the Jews, it was the *Meſſiah*: Whoſe Coming was now the general Expectation, as appears, *Luke* III. 15. *The people being in expectation, and all men muſing in their hearts of* John, *whether he were the* Meſſiah *or not*. And when the Prieſts and Levites ſent to ask him who he was; He underſtanding their meaning, anſwers, *John* I. 19. That he was *not the Meſſiah*: But he bears witneſs that Jeſus *is the Son of God, i. e.* the *Meſſiah*, *v.* 34.

This looking for the *Meſſiah* at this time, we ſee alſo in *Simeon*; who is ſaid to be *waiting for the conſolation of Iſrael*, *Luke* II. 21. And having the Child Jeſus in his Arms, he ſays he had *ſeen the Salvation of the Lord*, v. 30. And *Anna coming at the ſame inſtant into the Temple, ſhe gave thanks alſo unto the Lord, and ſpake of him to all them that looked for Redemption in Iſrael*, v. 38. And of *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, it is ſaid, *Mark* XV. 43. That *he alſo expected the Kingdom of God*: By all which was meant the Coming of the *Meſſiah*. And *Luke* XIX. 11.

'tis ſaid, *They thought that the Kingdom of God ſhould immediately appear.*

This being premiſed, let us ſee what it was that *John the Baptiſt* preached, when he firſt entred upon his Miniſtry. That St. *Matthew* tells us, *Chap.* III. 1, 2. *In thoſe days came* John the Baptiſt *preaching in the Wilderneſs of* Judea, *ſaying, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* This was a declaration of the Coming of the *Meſſiah*; the *Kingdom of Heaven* and the *Kingdom of God* being the ſame, as is clear out of ſeveral places of the Evangeliſts; and both ſignifying the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*. The Profeſſion which *John the Baptiſt* made, when ſent to the Jews, *John* I. 19. was, That *he was not the Meſſiah*; but that Jeſus was. This will appear to any one, who will compare *v.* 26—34. with *John* III. 27. 30. The Jews being very inquiſitive to know whether *John* were the *Meſſiah*; he poſitively denies it, but tells them, he was only his Fore-runner; and that there ſtood one amongſt them, who would follow him, whoſe Shoe-latchet he was not worthy to untie. The next day ſeeing Jeſus, he ſays, he was the Man;

Man; and that his own Baptizing in Water, was only that *Jeſus* might be manifeſted to the World; and that he knew him not, till he ſaw the Holy Ghoſt deſcend upon him. He that ſent him to Baptize having told him, that he on whom he ſhould ſee the Spirit deſcend, and reſt upon, he it was that ſhould Baptize with the Holy Ghoſt; And that therefore he witneſſed, that *this was the Son of God*, v. 34. *i.e.* the *Meſſiah*. And *Chap.* III. 26, *&c.* They came to *John the Baptiſt*, and tell him, that *Jeſus* baptized, and that all Men went to him. *John* anſwers, He has his Authority from Heaven; You know I never ſaid, I was the *Meſſiah*, but that I was ſent before him; He muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe; For God hath ſent him, and he ſpeaks the words of God; And God hath given all things into the hands of his Son, *And he that believes on the Son, hath eternal life*; The ſame Doctrine, and nothing elſe but what was preached by the Apoſtles afterwards: As we have ſeen all through the *Acts*, *v. g.* that Jeſus was the *Meſſiah*. And thus it was

that *John* bears witneſs of our Saviour, as Jeſus himſelf ſays, *John* V. 33.

This alſo was the Declaration was given of him at his Baptiſm, by a voice from Heaven; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*, *Mat.* III. 17. Which was a declaration of him to be the *Meſſiah*; *the Son of God* being (as we have ſhewed) underſtood to ſignifie the *Meſſiah*. To which we may add the firſt mention of him after his Conception, in the words of the Angel to *Joſeph*; Mat. I. 21. *Thou ſhalt call his name Jeſus*, or Saviour; *for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins*. It was a received Doctrine in the Jewiſh Nation, that at the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, all their ſins ſhould be forgiven them. Theſe words therefore of the Angel we may look on as a declaration, that Jeſus was the *Meſſiah*; whereof theſe words, *his People*, are a further mark; which ſuppoſe him to have a People, and conſequently to be a King.

After his Baptiſm, Jeſus himſelf enters upon his Miniſtry. But before we examine what it was he propoſed to be believed, we muſt obſerve, that there

there is a three-fold declaration of the *Meſſiah*.

1. By Miracles. The Spirit of Prophecy had now for many Ages forſaken the Jews: And though their Common-Wealth were not quite diſſolved, but that they lived under their own Laws, yet they were under a Foreign Dominion, ſubject to the *Romans*. In this ſtate their account of the time being up, they were in expectation of the *Meſſiah*; and of deliverance by him in a Kingdom, he was to ſet up, according to their Ancient Propheſies of him: Which gave them hopes of an extraordinary Man yet to come from God, who with an Extraordinary and Divine Power, and Miracles, ſhould evidence his Miſſion, and work their Deliverance. And of any ſuch extraordinary Perſon who ſhould have the Power of doing Miracles, they had no other expectation but only of their *Meſſiah*. One great Prophet and worker of Miracles, and only One more, they expected; who was to be the *Meſſiah*. And therefore we ſee the People juſtified their *believing in him*, *i. e.* their believing him to be the *Meſſiah*, becauſe of the Mi-

racles he did; *John* VII. 31. *And many of the people believed in him, and ſaid, when the* Meſſiah *cometh, will he do more Miracles than this man hath done?* And when the Jews, at the Feaſt of Dedication, *John* X. 24, 25. coming about him, ſaid unto him, *How long doſt thou make us doubt? If thou be the* Meſſiah, *tell us plainly. Jeſus anſwered them, I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, bear witneſs of me.* And *John* V. 36. He ſays, *I have a greater witneſs than that of* John; *for the works which the Father hath given me to do, the ſame works that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me.* Where, by the way, we may obſerve, that his being *ſent by the Father*, is but another way of expreſſing the *Meſſiah*; Which is evident from this place here, *John* V. compared with that of *John* X. laſt quoted. For there he ſays, that his Works bear witneſs of him: And what was that witneſs? *viz.* That he was the *Meſſiah.* Here again he ſays, that his Works bear witneſs of him: And what is that witneſs? *viz. That the Father ſent him.* By which we are taught,

taught, that to be ſent by the Father, and to be the *Meſſiah*, was the ſame thing, in his way of declaring himſelf. And accordingly we find, *John* IV. 53. & XI. 45. and elſewhere, many hearkened and aſſented to this Teſtimony, and believed on him, ſeeing the things that he did.

2. Another way of declaring the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, was by Phraſes and Circumlocutions, that did ſignifie or intimate his Coming; though not in direct words pointing out the Perſon. The moſt uſual of theſe were, *The Kingdom of God, and of Heaven*; becauſe it was that which was oftneſt ſpoken of the *Meſſiah*, in the Old Teſtament, in very plain words: And a Kingdom was that which the Jews moſt looked after, and wiſhed for. In that known place, *Iſa.* IX. *The* GOVERNMENT *ſhall be upon his ſhoulders; he ſhall be called the* PRINCE *of Peace: Of the increaſe of his* GOVERNMENT *and Peace there ſhall be no end: Upon the* THRONE *of* David, *and upon his* KINGDOM, *to order it, and to eſtabliſh it with Judgment, and with Juſtice, from henceforth even for ever.*

Micah

Micah V. 2. *But thou,* Bethlehem Ephratah, *though thou be little among the thouſands of* Judah, *yet out of thee ſhall He come forth unto me, that is to be the RULER in Iſrael.* And *Daniel*, beſides that he calls him *Meſſiah the PRINCE, Chap.* IX. 25. In the account of his Viſion *of the Son of Man, Chap.* VII. 13, 14. ſays, *There was given him Dominion, Glory, and a KINGDOM, that all People, Nations, and Languages ſhould ſerve him: His Dominion is an everlaſting Dominion which ſhall not paſs away; and his KINGDOM that which ſhall not be deſtroyed.* So that the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of Heaven, were common Phraſes amongſt the Jews, to ſignifie the times of the *Meſſiah.* Luke XIV. 15. *One of* the Jews *that ſat at meat with him, ſaid unto him, Bleſſed is he that ſhall eat bread in the Kingdom of God. Chap.* XVII. 20. The Phariſees demanded, *When the Kingdom of God ſhould come?* And St. *John Baptiſt* came, *ſaying, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand:* A Phraſe he would not have uſed in Preaching, had it not been underſtood.

There

There are other Expreſſions that ſignified the *Meſſiah*, and his Coming; which we ſhall take notice of as they come in our way.

3. By plain and direct words, declaring the Doctrine of the *Meſſiah*; ſpeaking out that Jeſus was He: As we ſee the Apoſtles did, when they went about Preaching the Goſpel, after our Saviour's Reſurrection. This was the open clear way, and that which one would think the *Meſſiah* himſelf, when he came, ſhould have taken; eſpecially if it were of that moment, that upon mens believing him to be the *Meſſiah*, depended the forgiveneſs of their ſins. And yet we ſee that our Saviour did not: But on the contrary, for the moſt part, made no other diſcovery of himſelf, at leaſt in *Judea*, and at the beginning of his Miniſtry, but in the two former ways, which were more obſcure; Not declaring himſelf to be the *Meſſiah*, any otherwiſe than as it might be gathered from the Miracles he did, and the conformity of his Life and Actions with the Propheſies of the Old Teſtament concerning him; and from ſome general Diſ-

courſes

courſes of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* being come, under the name of the *Kingdom of God*, and *of Heaven*. Nay, ſo far was he from publickly owning himſelf to be the *Meſſiah*, that he forbid the doing of it: *Mark* VIII. 27—30. *He asked his Diſciples, whom do men ſay that I am? And they anſwered*, John the Baptiſt; *but ſome ſay*, Elias; *and others, one of the Prophets.* (So that it is evident, that even thoſe who believed him an extraordinary Perſon, knew not yet who he was, or that he gave himſelf out for the *Meſſiah*; though this was in the third Year of his Miniſtry, and not a year before his Death.) *And he ſaith unto them, but whom ſay ye that I am? And* Peter *anſwered, and ſaid unto him, Thou art the* Meſſiah. *And he charged them that they ſhould tell no man of him.* Luke IV. 41. *And Devils came out of many, crying, Thou art the* Meſſiah, *the Son of God: And he rebuking them, ſuffered them not to ſpeak, that they knew him to be the* Meſſiah. *Mark* III. 11, 12. *Unclean ſpirits, when they ſaw him, fell down before him, and cryed, ſaying, Thou art the Son of God: And he ſtraitly charged*

ged them that they ſhould not make him known. Here again we may obſerve from the comparing of the two Texts, that *Thou art the Son of God*; or, *Thou art the Meſſiah*; were indifferently uſed for the ſame thing. But to return to the matter in hand.

This concealment of himſelf will ſeem ſtrange, in one who was come to bring Light into the World, and was to ſuffer Death for the Teſtimony of the Truth. This reſervedneſs will be thought to look as if he had a mind to conceal himſelf, and not to be known to the World for the *Meſſiah*; nor to be believed on as ſuch. But we ſhall be of another mind, and conclude this proceeding of his according to Divine Wiſdom, and ſuited to a fuller Manifeſtation and Evidence of his being the *Meſſiah*; When we conſider, that he was to fill out the time foretold of his Miniſtry; And, after a Life illuſtrious in Miracles and Good Works, attended with Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, and Suffering, and every way conformable to the Propheſies of him, ſhould be lead as a ſheep to the ſlaughter, and with all quiet and ſubmiſſion be brought

brought to the Croſs, though there were no guilt nor fault found in him. This could not have been, if as ſoon as he appeared in Publick, and began to Preach, he had preſently profeſſed himſelf to have been the *Meſſiah*; the King that owned that Kingdom he publiſhed to be at hand. For the *Sanhedrim* would then have laid hold on it, to have got him into their Power, and thereby have taken away his Life; at leaſt, they would have diſturbed his Miniſtry, and hindred the Work he was about. That this made him cautious, and avoid, as much as he could, the occaſions of provoking them, and falling into their hands, is plain from *John* VII. 1. *After theſe things Jeſus walked in Galilee*; out of the way of the Chief Prieſts and Rulers; *for he would not walk in Jewry, becauſe the Jews ſought to kill him.* Thus, making good what he foretold them at *Jeruſalem*, when at the firſt Paſſover after his beginning to Preach the Goſpel, upon his Curing the man at the Pool of *Bethesday*, they ſought to kill him, *John* V. 16. *Ye have not*, ſays he, v. 38. *his word abiding amongſt you: For whom he hath ſent, him ye believe*

believe not. This was spoken more particularly to the Jews of *Jerusalem*, who were the forward men, zealous to take away his Life: And it imports, that because of their Unbelief and Opposition to him, the *Word of God, i. e.* the Preaching of the Kingdom of the *Messiah*, which is often called the Word of God, did not stay amongst them: He could not stay amongst them, Preach and explain to them the Kingdom of the *Messiah.*

That the Word of God, here, signifies *the Word of God* that should make Jesus known to them to be the *Messiah*, is evident from the Context: And this meaning of this place is made good by the event. For after this, we hear no more of Jesus at *Jerusalem*, till the Pentecost come twelve month; though 'tis not to be doubted but that he was there the next Passover, and other Feasts between, but privately. And now at *Jerusalem*, at the Feast of *Pentecost*, near fifteen Months after, he says very little, and not a word of the Kingdom of Heaven being come, or at hand; nor did he any Miracle there. And returning to *Jerusalem* at the Feast

of

of Tabernacles, it is plain, that from this time till then, which was a Year and a half, he had not Taught them at *Jeruſalem.*

For, 1. It is ſaid, *John* VII. 2. 15. That he teaching in the Temple at the Feaſt of Tabernacles, *The Jews marvelled, ſaying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?* A ſign they had not been uſed to his Preaching: For if they had, they would not now have marvelled.

2. *Ver.* 19. He ſays thus to them: *Did not* Moſes *give you the Law, and yet none of you keep the Law? Why go you about to kill me? One work,* or miracle, *I did* here amongſt you, *and ye all marvel.* Moſes *therefore gave unto you Circumciſion, and ye on the Sabbath-day circumciſe a man: If a man on the Sabbath-day receive Circumciſion, that the Law of* Moſes *ſhould not be broken, are ye angry with me, becauſe I have made a man every way whole on the Sabbath-day?* Which is a direct defence of what he did at *Jeruſalem* a Year and a half before, when he laſt preached to them there; which is reported, *John* V. 1—16. And it is at that very time when

when he told them, *v.* 38. *Ye have not the Word of God remaining among you, becauſe whom he hath ſent ye believe not.* Whereby, I think, he ſignifies his not ſtaying and being frequent amongſt them, Preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom; becauſe their great Unbelief, Oppoſition, and Malice to him would not permit his ſtay and Preaching amongſt them.

This was manifeſtly ſo in fact. For the firſt Miracle he did at *Jeruſalem*, which was at the ſecond Paſſover after his Baptiſm, brought him in danger of his Life; Which made him forbear Preaching again there till the Feaſt of Tabernacles, immediately preceding his laſt Paſſover: So that till half a Year before his Paſſion, he did but one Miracle, and preached but once publickly, at *Jeruſalem*. Theſe Tryals he made there: But found their unbelief ſuch, that if he had ſtaid and perſiſted to Preach the good tidings of the Kingdom, and to ſhew himſelf by Miracles among them, he could not have had time and freedom to do thoſe Works which his Father had given him to finiſh, as he ſays, *v.* 36. of this fifth of St. *John*.

When upon the curing of the withered Hand on the Sabbath-day, *The* Pharisees *took Counsel with the* Herodians, *how they might destroy him; Jesus withdrew himself with his Disciples to the Sea: And a great multitude from* Galilee *followed him, and from* Judea, *and from Jerusalem, and from* Idumea, *and from beyond* Jordan, *and they about* Tyre *and* Sidon, *A great multitude; when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him, and he healed them all, and CHARGED THEM THAT THEY SHOULD NOT MAKE HIM KNOWN: That it might be fulfilled what was spoken by the Prophet* Isaiah, *saying: Behold my servant whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew Judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets*, Mat. XII. and *Mark* III.

And *John* XI. 47 Upon the News of our Saviour's raising *Lazarus* from the Dead, *The Chief Priests and* Pharisees *convened the* Sanhedrim, *and said, what do we? For this man does many Miracles.*

Miracles. v. 53. *Then from that day forth they took counſel together for to put him to death.* v. 54. *Jeſus therefore walked no more openly amongſt the Jews.* His Miracles had now ſo much declared him to be the *Meſſiah*, that the Jews could no longer bear him, nor he truſt himſelf amongſt them; *But went thence unto a Country near to the Wilderneſs, into a City called* Ephraim, *and there continued with his Diſciples.* This was but a little before his laſt Paſſover, as appears by the following words, *v.* 55. *And the Jews Paſſover was nigh at hand:* And he could not, now his Miracles had made him ſo well known, have been ſecure the little time that now remained till his hour was fully come; if he had not with his wonted and neceſſary caution withdrawn, *And walked no more openly amongſt the Jews*, till his time (at the next Paſſover) was fully come; And then again he appeared amongſt them openly.

Nor would the *Romans* have ſuffered him, if he had gone about Preaching that he was the King whom the Jews expected. Such an Accuſation would have been forwardly brought againſt

him by the Jews, if they could have heard it out of his own mouth; And That had been his Publick Doctrine to his followers, Which was openly preached by the Apoſtles after his Death, when he appeared no more. And of this they were accuſed, *Acts* XVII. 5—9. *But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baſer ſort, and gathered a company, and ſet all the City in an uproar; And aſſaulted the Houſe of* Jaſon, *and ſought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them* [Paul and Silas] *not, they drew* Jaſon *and certain brethren unto the Rulers of the City, crying, theſe that have turned the World upſide down, are come hither alſo, whom* Jaſon *hath received: And theſe all do contrary to the decrees of* Cæſar, *ſaying, that there is another King, one Jeſus. And they troubled the People and the Rulers of the City, when they heard theſe things: And when they had taken Security of* Jaſon *and the other, they let them go.*

Though the Magiſtrates of the World had no great regard to the talk of a King, who had ſuffered Death, and

and appeared no longer any where; Yet if our Saviour had openly declared this of himſelf in his Life-time, with a train of Diſciples and Followers every where owning and crying him up for their King, the *Roman* Governour of *Judea* could not have forborn to have taken notice of it, and have made uſe of their Force againſt him. This the Jews were not miſtaken in; and therefore made uſe of it as the ſtrongeſt Accuſation, and likelieſt to prevail with *Pilate* againſt him for the taking away his Life; It being Treaſon, and an unpardonable Offence, which could not ſcape Death from a *Roman* Deputy, without the Forfeiture of his own Life. Thus then they Accuſe him to *Pilate*, *Luke* XXIII. 2. *We found this fellow perverting the Nation, and forbidding to give Tribute to* Cæſar, *ſaying, that he himſelf is the Meſſiah, a King.*

Our Saviour indeed, now that his time was come, (and he in Cuſtody, and forſaken of all the World, and ſo out of all danger of raiſing any Sedition or Diſturbance,) owns himſelf, to *Pilate*, to be a King; after having firſt

told *Pilate*, *John* XVIII. 36. *That his Kingdom was not of this World:* And for a Kingdom in another World, *Pilate* knew that his Maſter at *Rome* concerned not himſelf. But had there been any the leaſt appearance of truth in the Allegations of the Jews, that he had perverted the Nation; forbidding to pay Tribute to *Cæſar*, or drawing the People after him, as their King; *Pilate* would not ſo readily have pronounced him Innocent. But we ſee what he ſaid to his Accuſers, *Luke* XXIII. 13, 14. *Pilate, when he had called together the Chief Prieſts and the Rulers of the People, ſaid unto them, You have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the People; and behold, I having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man, touching thoſe things whereof you accuſe him: No, nor yet* Herod, *for I ſent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done by him.* And therefore finding a man of that mean Condition, and innocent Life, (no mover of Seditions, or diſturber of the Publick Peace,) without a Friend or a Follower; would have diſmiſſed him, as a King of no conſe-

quence;

quence; as an innocent man, falſely and maliciouſly accuſed by the Jews.

How neceſſary this Caution was in our Saviour, to ſay or do nothing that might juſtly offend, or render him ſuſpected to the *Roman* Governour; and how glad the Jews would have been to have any ſuch thing againſt him; we may ſee, *Luke* XX. 20. The Chief Prieſts and the Scribes *watched him, and ſent forth ſpies, who ſhould feign themſelves juſt men, that might take hold of his words, that ſo they might deliver him unto the Power and Authority of the Governour.* And the very thing wherein they hoped to entrap him in this place, was paying Tribute to *Cæſar*, which they afterwards falſely accuſed him of. And what would they have done, if he had before them profeſſed himſelf to have been the *Meſſiah*, their King and Deliverer?

And here we may obſerve the wonderful Providence of God, who had ſo ordered the ſtate of the Jews at the time when his Son was to come into the World; that though neither their Civil Conſtitution, nor Religious Worſhip were diſſolved, yet the Power of

Life and Death was taken from them; Whereby he had an Opportunity to publiſh the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*; that is, his own Royalty, under the name of the *Kingdom of God*, and *of Heaven*: Which the Jews well enough underſtood, and would certainly have put him to Death for, had the Power been in their own hands. But this being no matter of Accuſation to the *Romans*, hindred him not from ſpeaking of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, as he did: Sometimes in reference to his appearing in the World, and being believed on by particular Perſons; Sometimes in reference to the Power ſhould be given him by the Father at his Reſurrection; And ſometimes in reference to his coming to Judge the World at the laſt day in the full Glory and completion of his Kingdom. Theſe were ways of declaring himſelf, which the Jews could lay no hold on, to bring him in danger with *Pontius Pilate*, and get him ſeized and put to Death.

Another Reaſon there was, that hindred him as much as the former from profeſſing himſelf in expreſs words to be the *Meſſiah*; and that was, that the whole

whole Nation of the Jews expecting at this time their *Meſſiah*, and deliverance by him from the Subjection they were in to a Foreign Yoke, the body of the People would certainly upon his declaring himſelf to be the *Meſſiah* their King, have roſe up in Rebellion, and ſet him at the Head of them. And indeed, the miracles that he did ſo much diſpoſed them to think him to be the *Meſſiah*, that though ſhrouded under the obſcurity of a mean Condition, and a very private ſimple Life, and his paſſing for a *Galilean*, (his Birth at *Bethlehem* being then concealed) and he not aſſuming to himſelf any Power or Authority, or ſo much as the Name of the *Meſſiah*, yet he could hardly avoid being ſet up by a Tumult, and proclaimed their King. So *John* tells us, *Chap.* V. 14, 15. *Then thoſe men, when they had ſeen the Miracles that Jeſus did, ſaid, This is of a truth that Prophet that ſhould come into the World. When therefore Jeſus perceived that they would come to take him by force to make him King, he departed again into a Mountain himſelf alone.* This was upon his feeding of Five Thouſand with

with five Barley Loaves and two Fishes. So hard was it for him, doing those miracles which were necessary to testifie his Mission, and which often drew great multitudes after him, *Mat.* IV. 25. to keep the heady and hasty multitude from such Disorder, as would have involved him in it; and have disturbed the course, and cut short the time of his Ministry; and drawn on him the Reputation and Death of a Turbulent Seditious Malefactor: Contrary to the design of his coming, which was to be offered up a Lamb blameless, and void of Offence; his Innocence appearing to all the World, even to him that delivered him up to be crucified. This it would have been impossible to have avoided, if in his Preaching every where, he had openly assumed to himself the Title of their *Messiah*; Which was all was wanting to set the People in a flame; who, drawn by his miracles, and the hopes of finding a Deliverer in so extraordinary a man, followed him in great numbers. We read every where of multitudes; And in *Luke* XII. 1. of *Myriads* that were gathered about him. This conflux

of

of People, thus diſpoſed, would not have failed, upon his declaring himſelf to be the *Meſſiah*, to have made a Commotion, and with Force ſet him up for their King. It is plain therefore from theſe theſe two Reaſons, why, (though he came to Preach the Goſpel, and Convert the World to a belief of his being the *Meſſiah*, and though he ſays ſo much of his Kingdom, under the Title of the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of Heaven,) he yet makes it not his buſineſs to perſwade them that he himſelf is the *Meſſiah*, or does in his Publick Preaching declare himſelf to be him. He inculcates to the People, on all occaſions, that the Kingdom of God is come. He ſhews the way of Admittance into this Kingdom, *viz.* Repentance and Baptiſm; and teaches the Laws of it, *viz.* Good Life, according to the ſtricteſt Rules of Vertue and Morality. But who the King was of this Kingdom, he leaves to his miracles to point out to thoſe who would conſider what he did, and make the right uſe of it, now; Or to witneſs to thoſe who ſhould hearken to the Apoſtles hereafter; when they preached

preached it in plain words, and called upon them to believe it, after his Reſurrection; when there ſhould be no longer any fear that it ſhould cauſe any diſturbance in Civil Societies and the Governments of the World. But he could not declare himſelf to be the *Meſſiah*, without manifeſt danger of Tumult and Sedition. And the miracles he did, declared it ſo much, that he was fain often to hide himſelf, and withdraw from the concourſe of the People. The Leper that he cured, *Mark* I. though forbid to ſay any thing, yet *blazed it ſo abroad, that Jeſus could no more openly enter into the City, but was without in deſart places*; And there *they came to him from every quarter.* And thus he did more than once.

This being premiſed, let us take a view of the Promulgation of the Goſpel by our Saviour himſelf, and ſee what it was he taught the World, and required men to believe.

The firſt beginning of his Miniſtry, whereby he ſhewed himſelf, ſeems to be at *Cana* in *Galilee*, ſoon after his Baptiſm; where he turned Water into Wine: Of which St. *John*, *Chap.* II. 11. ſays

ſays thus, *This beginning of Miracles Jeſus made, and manifeſted his glory, and his Diſciples believed in him.* His Diſciples here believed in him, but we hear not of any other Preaching to them, but by this Miracle, whereby he *manifeſted his Glory*; *i. e.* of being the *Meſſiah* the Prince. So *Nathanael*, without any other Preaching, but only our Saviour's diſcovering to him that he knew him after an extraordinary manner, preſently acknowledges him to be the *Meſſiah*; crying, *Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God*; *Thou art the King of Iſrael.*

From hence, ſtaying a few days at *Capernaum*, he goes to *Jeruſalem* to the Paſſover; and there he drives the Traders out of the Temple, *John* II. 12—15. ſaying, *Make not my Father's Houſe a Houſe of merchandize.* Where we ſee, he uſes a Phraſe, which by Interpretation ſignifies that he was the *Son of God*, though at that time unregarded. *v.* 16. Hereupon the Jews demand, *What ſign doſt thou ſhew us, ſince thou doeſt theſe things? Jeſus anſwered, Deſtroy ye this Temple, and in three days I will raiſe it again.* This is an inſtance

ſtance of what way Jeſus took to declare himſelf: For 'tis plain by their Reply, the Jews underſtood him not, nor his Diſciples neither; For 'tis ſaid, *v.* 22. *When therefore he was riſen from the dead, his Diſciples remembred that he ſaid this to them: And they believed the Scripture, and the ſaying of Jeſus to them.*

This therefore we may look on, in the beginning, as a Pattern of Chriſt's Preaching, and ſhewing himſelf to the Jews; Which he generally followed afterwards, *viz.* ſuch a manifeſtation of himſelf, as every one at preſent could not underſtand; but yet carried ſuch an Evidence with it to thoſe who were well diſpoſed now, or would reflect on it when the whole courſe of his Miniſtry was over, as was ſufficient clearly to convince them that he was the *Meſſiah.*

The reaſon of this method uſed by our Saviour, the Scripture gives us here, at this his firſt appearing in Publick; after his entrance upon his Miniſtry; to be a Rule and Light to us in the whole courſe of it. For the next Verſe taking notice that many

believed

believed on him, *becauſe of his Miracles*, (which was all the Preaching they had.) 'Tis ſaid, *v.* 24. *But Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them, becauſe he knew all men*; *i. e.* He declared not himſelf ſo openly to be the *Meſſiah*, their King, as to put himſelf into the Power of the Jews, by laying himſelf open to their malice; whom he knew would be ſo ready to lay hold on it to accuſe him. For, as the next Verſe 25. ſhews, he knew well enough what was in them. We may here farther obſerve, That *Believing in his Name*, ſignifies believing him to be the *Meſſiah*. *V.* 22. tells us, That *many at the Paſſover believed in his name, when they ſaw the Miracles that he did*. What other Faith could theſe Miracles produce in them, who ſaw them, but that this was He, of whom the Scripture ſpoke, who was to be their Deliverer?

Whilſt he was now at *Jeruſalem*, *Nicodemus*, a Ruler of the Jews, comes to him, *John* III. 1—21. to whom he Preaches Eternal Life by Faith in the *Meſſiah*, *v.* 15. & 17. But in general terms, without naming himſelf to be that *Meſſiah*; though his whole Diſcourſe

Diſcourſe tends to it. This is all we hear of our Saviour the firſt Year of his Miniſtry; But only his Baptiſm, Faſting, and Temptation in the beginning of it; and ſpending the reſt of it after the Paſſover in *Judea* with his Diſciples, Baptizing there. But *when he knew that the* Phariſees *reported that he made and baptized more Diſciples than* John, *he left* Judea, and got out of their way again into *Galilee*, John IV. 1. 3.

In his way back, by the Well of *Sichar*, he diſcourſes with the *Samaritan* Woman; And after having opened to her the True and Spiritual Worſhip which was at hand, which the Woman preſently underſtands of the times of the *Meſſiah*, who was then looked for; Thus ſhe anſwers, *v.* 25. *I know that the Meſſiah cometh: When he is come, he will tell us all things.* Whereupon our Saviour, though we hear no ſuch thing from him in *Jeruſalem* or *Judea*, or to *Nicodemus*, yet here to this *Samaritan* Woman, he in plain and direct words owns and declares, that he himſelf, who talked with her, was the *Meſſiah*, *v.* 26.

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This would ſeem very ſtrange, that he ſhould be more free and open to a *Samaritan*, than he was to the Jews; were not the reaſon plain from what we have obſerved above. He was now out of *Judea*, with a People with whom the *Jews* had no Commerce; *v.*9. Who were not diſpoſed out of Envy, as the *Jews* were, to ſeek his Life, or to Accuſe him to the *Roman* Governour, or to make an Inſurrection to ſet a *Jew* up for their King. What the Conſequence was of his Diſcourſe with this *Samaritan* Woman, we have an Account, *v.* 28. 39—42. *She left her Water-pot, and went her way into the City, and ſaith to the men, Come, ſee a man who told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Meſſiah? And many of the* Samaritans *of that City BELIEVED ON HIM for the ſaying of the Woman, which teſtified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the* Samaritans *were come unto him, they beſought him that he would tarry with them: And he abode there two days. And many more believed becauſe of his own word: And ſaid unto the Woman, Now we believe not becauſe of thy ſaying; For we*

have heard him our ſelves; and we know, (*i. e.* are fully perſwaded,) *that it is indeed the Meſſiah, the Saviour of the World.* By comparing *v.* 39. with 41 & 42. it is plain, that *believing on him* ſignifies no more than believing him to be the *Meſſiah.*

From *Sichar* Jeſus goes to *Nazareth*, the place he was bred up in; and there Reading in the Synagogue a Prophecy concerning the *Meſſiah* out of the LXI of *Iſaiah*, he tells them, *Luke* IV. 21. *This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.*

But being in danger of his Life at *Nazareth*, he leaves it, for *Capernaum*: And then, as St. *Matthew* informs us, *Chap.* IV. 17. *He began to Preach, and ſay, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* Or, as St. *Mark* has it, *Chap.* I. 14, 15. *Preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom of God; and ſaying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye, and believe in the Goſpel*; *i. e.* believe this good News. This removing to *Capernaum*, and ſeating himſelf there in the Borders of *Zabulon* and *Naphtali*, was, as St. *Matthew* obſerves, *Chap.* IV. 13—16. That a

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Prophecy of *Iſaiah* might be fulfilled. Thus the Actions and Circumſtances of his Life anſwered the Propheſies, and declared him to be the *Meſſiah*. And by what St. *Mark* ſays in this place, it is manifeſt, that the Goſpel which he preached and required them to believe, was no other but the good tidings of the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, and of his Kingdom; the time being now fulfilled.

In his way to *Capernaum*, being come to *Cana*, a Noble-man of *Capernaum* came to him, *v.* 47. *And beſought him that he would come down and heal his Son, for he was at the point of death.* v. 48. *Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, except ye ſee ſigns and wonders, you will not believe.* Then he returning homewards, and finding that his Son began to *mend at the ſame hour in which Jeſus ſaid unto him, thy Son liveth; he himſelf believed, and his whole Houſe*, v. 53.

Here this Noble-man is by the Apoſtle pronounced to be a *Believer*. And what does he *believe?* Even that which Jeſus complains, *v.* 48. *They would not* ***BELIEVE***, except they ſaw Signs and Wonders: Which could be nothing

but what thoſe of *Samaria*, in the ſame Chapter, believed; *viz.* that he was the *Meſſiah*. For we no where in the Goſpel hear of any thing elſe had been propoſed to be believed by them.

Having done Miracles, and cured all their ſick at *Capernaum*, he ſays, *Let us go to the adjoyning Towns, that I may preach there alſo; for therefore came I forth*, *Mark* I. 38. Or, as St. *Luke* has it, *Chap.* IV. 43. He tells the multitude, who would have kept him that he might not go from them, *I muſt Evangelize*, or tell the good Tidings of the *Kingdom of God*, to other Cities alſo; for therefore am I ſent. And St. *Matthew*, *Chap.* IV. 23. tells us how he executed this Commiſſion he was ſent on. *And Jeſus went about all* Galilee, *teaching in their Synagogues, and preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom, and curing all Diſeaſes.* This then was what he was ſent to Preach every where, *viz.* The Goſpel of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*; and by the Miracles and Good he did, let them know who was the *Meſſiah*.

Hence he goes up to *Jeruſalem*, to the ſecond Paſſover ſince the beginning of

of his Miniſtry. And here diſcourſing to the Jews, who ſought to kill him, upon occaſion of the man, whom he had cured, carrying his Bed on the Sabbath-day; and for making God his Father; He tells them, that he wrought theſe things by the Power of God; and that he ſhall do greater things: For that the Dead ſhall, at his Summons, be raiſed; And that he, by a Power committed to him from his Father, ſhall Judge them; And that he is ſent by his Father; And that whoever ſhall hear his Word, and believe in him that ſent him, has Eternal Life. This, though a clear Deſcription of the *Meſſiah*, yet we may obſerve, that here to the angry *Jews*, who ſought to kill him, he ſays not a word of his Kingdom, nor ſo much as names the *Meſſiah*; But yet that he is the Son of God, and ſent from God, He refers them to the Teſtimony of *John* the *Baptiſt*, to the Teſtimony of his own Miracles, and of God himſelf in the Voice from Heaven; and of the Scriptures, and of *Moſes*. He leaves them to learn from theſe the Truth they were to believe, *viz.* that he was the

Messiah sent from God. This you may read more at large, *John* V. 1—47.

The next place where we find him Preaching, was on the Mount, *Mat.* V. and *Luke* VI. This is by much the longest Sermon we have of his any where; and, in all likelihood, to the greatest Auditory. For it appears to have been to the Peple gathered to him from *Galilee*, and *Judea*, and *Jerusalem*, and from beyond *Jordan*; and that came out of *Idumea*, and from *Tyre* and *Sidon*; mentioned *Mark* III. 7, 8. and *Luke* VI. 17. But in this whole Sermon of his we do not find one word of Believing, and therefore no mention of the *Messiah*, or any intimation to the People who himself was. The reason whereof we may gather from *Mat.* 12. 16. where Christ *forbids them to make him known*; which supposes them to know already who he was. For that this XII. Chapter of *Matthew* ought to precede the Sermon in the Mount, is plain, by comparing it with *Mark* II. beginning at *v.* 13. to *Mark* III. 8. And comparing those Chapters of St. *Mark* with *Luke* VI. And I desire my Reader once for all here

here to take notice, that I have all along obſerved the order of time in our Saviour's Preaching; and have not, as I think, paſſed by any of his Diſcourſes. In this Sermon our Saviour only teaches them what were the Laws of his Kingdom, and what they muſt do who were admitted into it, of which I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more at large in another place; being at preſent only enquiring what our Saviour propoſed as matter of Faith to be believed.

After this, *John* the *Baptiſt* ſends to him this Meſſage, *Luke* VII. 19. Asking, *Art thou he that ſhould come, or do we expect another?* That is, in ſhort, art thou the *Meſſiah?* And if thou art, why doſt thou let me, thy Fore-runner, languiſh in Priſon? Muſt I expect deliverance from any other? To which Jeſus returns this Anſwer, *v.* 22, 23. *Tell* John *what you have ſeen and heard: The Blind ſee, the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleanſed, the Deaf hear, the Dead are raiſed, to the Poor the Goſpel is preached; and bleſſed is he who is not offended in me.* What it is to be *offended* or *ſcandalized in him*, we may ſee by comparing *Mat.* XIII. 28. and

Mark IV. 17. with *Luke* VIII. 13. For what the two firſt call *ſcandalized*, the laſt calls *ſtanding off from*, or *forſaking*; *i. e.* not receiving him as the *Meſſiah*; (*Vid. Mark* VI. 1—6.) or revolting from him. Here Jeſus refers *John*, as he did the Jews before, to the Teſtimony of his Miracles, to know who he was; And this was generally his Preaching, whereby he declared himſelf to be the *Meſſiah*: Who was the only Prophet to come, whom the *Jews* had any expectation of; Nor did they look for any other Perſon to be ſent to them with the Power of Miracles, but only the *Meſſiah*. His Miracles, we ſee by his Anſwer to *John* the *Baptiſt*, he thought a ſufficient declaration amongſt them, that he was the *Meſſiah*. And therefore, upon his curing the poſſeſſed of the Devil, the Dumb, and Blind, *Mat.* XII. the People, who ſaw the Miracle, ſaid, *v.* 23. *Is not this the Son of David?* As much as to ſay, Is not this the *Meſſiah?* Whereat the *Phariſees* being offended, ſaid, He caſt out Devils by *Beelzebub*. Jeſus ſhewing the falſhood and vanity of their Blaſphemy, juſtifies the Conclu-

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cluſion the People made from this Miracle; ſaying, *v.* 28. That his caſting out Devils by the Spirit of God, was an Evidence that the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* was come.

One thing more there was in the Miracles done by his Diſciples, which ſhewed him to be the *Meſſiah*; That they were done in his Name. *In the name of Jeſus of* Nazareth, *riſe up and walk*, ſays St. *Peter* to the lame man whom he cured in the Temple, *Acts* III. 6. And how far the Power of that Name reached, they themſelves ſeem to wonder, *Luke* X. 17. *And the ſeventy returned again with joy, ſaying, Lord, even the Devils are ſubject to us in thy Name.*

From this Meſſage from *John* the *Baptiſt*, he takes occaſion to tell the People, that *John* was the Fore-runner of the *Meſſiah*; That from the time of *John* the *Baptiſt* the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* began; To which time all the Prophets and the Law pointed, *Luke* VII. and *Mat.* XI.

Luke VIII. 1. *Afterwards he went through every City and Village, preaching and ſhewing the good tidings of the King-*

Kingdom of God. Here we see, as every where, what his Preaching was; and consequently what was to be believed.

Soon after, he Preaches from a Boat to the People on the shoar. His Sermon at large we may read, *Mat.* XIII. *Mark* IV. and *Luke* VIII. But this is very observeable, That this second Sermon of his here, is quite different from his former in the Mount. For that was all so plain and intelligible, that nothing could be more so: Whereas this is all so involved in Parables, that even the Apostles themselves did not understand it. If we enquire into the reason of this, we shall possibly have some Light from the different Subjects of these two Sermons. There he preached to the People only Morality; Clearing the Precepts of the Law from the false glosses which were received in those days; And setting forth the Duties of a good Life in their full Obligation and Extent, beyond what the Judiciary Laws of the *Israelites* did, or the Civil Laws of any Country could prescribe or take notice of. But here in this Sermon by the Sea-side, he speaks of nothing but the Kingdom of the

the *Messiah*, which he does all in Parables. One Reason whereof St. *Matthew* gives us, *Chap.* XIII. 35. *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in Parables, I will utter things that have been kept secret from the Foundations of the World:* Another reason our Saviour himself gives of it, *v.* 11, 12. *Because to you is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly: But whosoever hath not, i. e.* improves not the Talents that he hath, *from him shall be taken away, even that that he hath.*

One thing it may not be amiss to observe; That our Saviour here in the Explication of the first of these Parables to his Apostles, calls the Preaching of the Kingdom of the *Messiah*, simply *the Word*; And *Luke* VIII. 21. *The Word of God*: From whence St. *Luke*, in the *Acts*, often mentions it under the name of the *Word*, and the *Word of God*, as we have elsewhere observed. To which I shall here add that of *Acts* VIII. 4. *Therefore they that were*

were ſcattered abroad, went every where preaching the Word: Which Word, as we have found by examining what they preached all through their Hiſtory, was nothing but this, That *Jeſus was the Meſſiah:* I mean, This was all the Doctrine they propoſed to be believed. For what they taught, as well as our Saviour, contained a great deal more; but that concerned Practice, and not Belief. And therefore our Saviour ſays, in the place before quoted, *Luke* VIII. 21. *They are my Mother, and my Brethren, who hear the Word of God, and do it:* Obeying the Law of the *Meſſiah* their King, being no leſs required than their believing that Jeſus was the *Meſſiah*, the King and Deliverer that was promiſed them.

Mat. IX. 13. We have an Account again of this Preaching; what it was, and how. *And Jeſus went about all the Cities and Villages, teaching in their Synagogues, and preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom; and healing every Sickneſs, and every Diſeaſe amongſt the people.* He acquainted them that the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* was come, and left

it to his Miracles to inſtruct and convince them that he was the *Meſſiah*.

Mat. X. When he ſent his Apoſtles abroad, their Commiſſion to Preach we have, *v.* 7, 8. in theſe words: *As ye go, preach, ſaying, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand; Heal the ſick, &c.* All that they had to Preach, was, that the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* was come. Whoſoever ſhould not receive them, the Meſſengers of this good Tidings, nor hearken to their Meſſage, incurred a heavier doom than *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* at the day of Judgment, *v.* 14, 15. But *v.* 32. *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, I will confeſs him before my Father who is in Heaven.* What this confeſſing of Chriſt is, we may ſee, by comparing *John* XII. 4. with IX. 22. *Nevertheleſs among the chief Rulers alſo many believed in him; But becauſe of the* Phariſees *they did not* CONFESS HIM, *leſt they ſhould be put out of the Synagogue.* And Chap. IX. 22. *Theſe words ſpake his Parents, becauſe they feared the Jews: For the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did* CONFESS THAT HE WAS THE MESSIAH, *he ſhould be*

be put out of the Synagogue. By which places it is evident, that to *confeſs* him, was to *confeſs* that he was the *Meſſiah.* From which give me leave to obſerve alſo (what I have cleared from other places, but cannot be too often remark'd, becauſe of the different ſenſe has been put upon that Phraſe;) *viz.* That *believing on* or *in him* (for εἰς αὐτὸν is rendred either way by the *Engliſh* Traſlation) ſignifies believing that he was the *Meſſiah.* For many of *the Rulers* (the Text ſays) *believed on him*; But they durſt not confeſs what they believed, *for fear they ſhould be put out of the Synagogue.* Now the Offence for which it was agreed that any one ſhould be put out of the Synagogue, was, if he *did confeſs that Jeſus was the Meſſiah.* Hence we may have a clear underſtanding of that paſſage of St. *Paul* to the *Romans*, where he tells them poſitively, what is the Faith he Preaches; *Rom.* X. 8,9. *That is the Word of Faith which we preach; That if thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and believe in thine heart, that God hath raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved:* And that alſo of St. *John* IV. 14,

14, 15. *We have ſeen, and do teſtifie, that the Father ſent the Son to be the Saviour of the World: Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* Where confeſſing Jeſus to be the Son of God, is the ſame with confeſſing him to be the *Meſſiah*: Thoſe two Expreſſions being underſtood amongſt the Jews to ſignifie the ſame thing, as we have ſhewn already.

How calling him the Son of God came to ſignifie that he was the *Meſſiah*, would not be hard to ſhew. But it is enough that it appears plainly that it was ſo uſed, and had that import amongſt the Jews at that time; Which if any one deſires to have further evidenced to him, he may add *Mat.* XXVI. 63. *John* VI. 69. & XI. 27. & XX. 31. to thoſe places before occaſionally taken notice of.

As was the Apoſtles Commiſſion, ſuch was their Performance; As we read, *Luke* IX. 6. *They departed, and went through the Towns, preaching the Goſpel, and healing every where.* Jeſus bid them Preach, *ſaying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* And St.

Luke

Luke tells us, they went through the Towns, Preaching the *Goſpel*; A word which in *Saxon* anſwers well the *Greek* εὐαγγέλιον, and ſignifies, as that does, *Good news*. So that what the inſpired Writers call the *Goſpel*, is nothing but the good Tidings that the *Meſſiah* and his Kingdom was come; And ſo it is to be underſtood in the New Teſtament; And ſo the Angel calls it *Good tidings of great joy*, *Luke* II. 10. Bringing the firſt News of our Saviour's Birth. And this ſeems to be all that his Diſciples were at that time ſent to Preach.

So *Luke* IX. 59, 60. To him that would have excuſed his preſent Attendance, becauſe of burying his Father; *Jeſus ſaid unto him, let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God.* When, I ſay, this was all they were to Preach, I muſt be underſtood, that this was the Faith they preached; But with it they joyned Obedience to the *Meſſiah*, whom they received for their King. So likewiſe when he ſent out the Seventy, *Luke* X. their Commiſſion was in theſe words, *v.* 9. *Heal the ſick, and ſay unto them, the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.*

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After the return of his Apoſtles to him, he ſits down with them in a Mountain; And a great multitude being gathered about them, St. *Luke* tells us, *Chap.* IX. 11. *The people followed him, and he received them, and ſpake unto them of the Kingdom of God; and healed them that had need of healing.* This was his Preaching to this Aſſembly, which conſiſted of Five Thouſand Men, beſides Women and Children: All which great multitude he fed with five Loaves and two Fiſhes, *Mat.* XIV. 21. And what this Miracle wrought upon them, St. *John* tells us, *Chap.* VI. 14, 15. *Then theſe men, when they had ſeen the miracle that Jeſus did, ſaid, This is of a truth that Prophet that ſhould come into the World*; *i. e.* the *Meſſiah.* For the *Meſſiah* was the only Perſon that they expected from God, and this the time they looked for him. And hence *John* the *Baptiſt*, *Mat.* XI. 3. ſtiles him, *He that ſhould come*; As in other places, *Come from God*, or *Sent from God*, are Phraſes uſed for the *Meſſiah.*

Here we ſee our Saviour keeps to his uſual method of Preaching: He ſpeaks to them of the Kingdom of God, and

does Miracles; by which they might underſtand him to be the *Meſſiah*, whoſe Kingdom he ſpake of. And here we have the reaſon alſo, why he ſo much concealed himſelf, and forbore to own his being the *Meſſiah*. For what the conſequence was, of the multitudes but thinking him ſo, when they were got together, St. *John* tells us in the very next words: *When Jeſus then perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a King, he departed again into a mountain himſelf alone.* If they were ſo ready to ſet him up for their King, only becauſe they gathered from his Miracles that he was the *Meſſiah*, whilſt he himſelf ſaid nothing of it; What would not the People have done; And what would not the Scribes and Phariſees have had an Opportunity to Accuſe him of; if he had openly profeſſed himſelf to have been the *Meſſiah*, that King they looked for? But this we have taken notice of already.

From hence going to *Capernaum*, whither he was followed by a great part of the People, whom he had the day before ſo miraculouſly fed; He, upon

upon the occaſion of their following him for the Loaves, bids them ſeek for the Meat that endureth to Eternal Life: And thereupon, *John* VI. 22—69. declares to them his being ſent from the Father; And that thoſe who believed in him, ſhould be raiſed to Eternal Life: But all this, very much involved in a mixture of Allegorical terms of eating, and of Bread, Bread of Life, which came down from Heaven, *&c.* Which is all comprehended and expounded in theſe ſhort and plain words, *v.* 47. & 54. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, he that believeth on me, hath everlaſting life and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day.* The ſum of all which Diſcourſe is, that he was the *Meſſiah* ſent from God; And that thoſe who believed him to be ſo, ſhould be raiſed from the Dead at the laſt day to Eternal Life. Theſe who he ſpoke to, were of thoſe who the day before would by force have made him King; And therefore 'tis no wonder he ſhould ſpeak to them of himſelf, and his Kingdom and Subjects, in obſcure and Myſtical terms; and ſuch as ſhould offend thoſe who looked for nothing but the Grandeur of a Temporal

Kingdom in this World, and the Protection and Proſperity they had promiſed themſelves under it. The hopes of ſuch a Kingdom, now that they had found a man that did Miracles, and therefore concluded to be the Deliverer they expected, had the day before almoſt drawn them into an open Inſurrection, and involved our Saviour in it. This he thought fit to put a ſtop to; they ſtill following him 'tis like with the ſame deſign. And therefore though he here ſpeaks to them of his Kingdom, it was in a way that ſo plainly bauk'd their Expectation; and ſhock'd them; that when they found themſelves diſappointed of thoſe vain hopes, and that he talked of their eating his Fleſh, and drinking his Blood, that they might have Life; the Jews ſaid, *v.* 52. *How can this man give us his fleſh to eat? And many, even of his Diſciples, ſaid, It was an hard ſaying, who can bear it?* And ſo were ſcandalized in him, and forſook him, *v.* 60. 66. But what the true meaning of this Diſcourſe of our Saviour was, the Confeſſion of St. *Peter*, who underſtood it better and anſwered for the reſt of the Apo-

Apoſtles ſhews: When Jeſus asked him, *v.* 67. *Will ye alſo go away? Then* Simon Peter *anſwered him, Lord, to whom ſhall we go? Thou haſt the words of eternal life; i. e.* Thou teacheſt us the way to attain Eternal Life; And accordingly *We believe, and are ſure that thou art the Meſſiah, the Son of the living God.* This was the eating his Fleſh, and drinking his Blood, whereby thoſe who did ſo had Eternal Life.

Sometime after this, he enquires of his Diſciples, *Mark* VIII. 27. Who the People took him for? They telling him, for *John* the *Baptiſt*, or one of the old Prophets riſen from the Dead; He asked, what they themſelves thought? And here again *Peter* anſwers in theſe words, *Mark* VIII. 29. *Thou art the Meſſiah.* Luke IX. 20. *The Meſſiah of God.* And *Mat.* XVI. 16. *Thou art the Meſſiah, the Son of the living God:* Which Expreſſions, we may hence gather, amount to the ſame thing. Whereupon our Saviour tells *Peter*, *Mat.* XVI. 17, 18. That this was ſuch a truth *As fleſh and blood could not reveal to him, but only his Father who was in Haven*; And that this was the Foun-

dation on which he was *to build his Church.* By all the parts of which paſſage it is more than probable, that he had never yet told his Apoſtles in direct words that he was the *Meſſiah*; but that they had gathered it from his Life and Miracles. For which we may imagine to our ſelves this probable Reaſon; Becauſe that if he had familiarly, and in direct terms, talked to his Apoſtles in private that he was the *Meſſiah* the Prince, of whoſe Kingdom he preached ſo much in publick every where; *Judas*, whom he knew falſe and treacherous, would have been readily made uſe of to teſtifie againſt him, in a matter that would have been really Criminal to the *Roman* Governour. This perhaps may help to clear to us that ſeemingly abrupt reply of our Saviour to his Apoſtles, *John* VI. 70. when they confeſſed him to be the *Meſſiah.* I will, for the better explaining of it, ſet down the paſſage at large. *Peter* having ſaid, *We believe, and are ſure that thou art the Meſſiah, the Son of the living God. Jeſus anſwered them, Have not I choſen you twelve, and one of you is* διαβολος? This is a reply ſeeming

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at firſt ſight nothing to the purpoſe; when yet it is ſure all our Saviour's Diſcourſes were wiſe and pertinent. It ſeems therefore to me to carry this ſenſe, to be underſtood afterwards by the eleven (as that of deſtroying the Temple, and raiſing it again in three days was) when they ſhould reflect on it after his being betray'd by *Judas*: You have confeſſed, and believe the truth concerning me; I am the *Meſſiah* your King: But do not wonder at it, that I have never openly declared it to you: For amongſt you twelve, whom I have choſen to be with me, there is one who is an Informer, or falſe Accuſer, (for ſo the *Greek* word ſignifies, and may poſſibly here be ſo tranſlated, rather than *Devil*) who, if I had owned my ſelf in plain words to have been the *Meſſiah*, *the King of Iſrael*, would have betrayed me, and informed againſt me.

That he was yet cautious of owning himſelf to his Apoſtles poſitively to be the *Meſſiah*, appears farther from the manner wherein he tells *Peter*, *v.* 18. that he will build his Church upon that Confeſſion of his, that he was the *Meſ-*

ſiah. I ſay unto thee, *Thou art Cephas*, or a Rock, *and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.* Words too doubtful to be laid hold on againſt him, as a Teſtimony that he profeſſed himſelf to be the *Meſſiah*; Eſpecially if we joyn with them the following words, *v.* 19. *And I will give thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*; *And what thou ſhalt bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven*; *and what thou ſhalt looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven.* Which being ſaid Perſonally to *Peter*, render the foregoing words of our Saviour (wherein he declares the Fundamental Article of his Church to be the believing him to be the *Meſſiah*) the more obſcure and doubtful, and leſs liable to be made uſe of againſt him; But yet ſuch as might afterwards be underſtood. And for the ſame reaſon he yet here again forbids the Apoſtles to ſay that he was the *Meſſiah*, *v.* 20.

From this time (ſay the Evangeliſts) Jeſus *began to ſhew to his Diſciples*, (*i. e.* his Apoſtles, who are often called Diſciples) *that he muſt go to* Jeruſalem, *and ſuffer many things from the Elders, Chief*

Chief Prieſts, and Scribes; and be killed, and be raiſed again the third day. Theſe, though all marks of the *Meſſiah*, yet how little underſtood by the Apoſtles, or ſuited to their expectation of the *Meſſiah*, appears from *Peter*'s rebuking him for it in the following words, *Mat.* XVI. 22. *Peter* had twice before owned him to be the *Meſſiah*, and yet he cannot here bear that he ſhould Suffer, and be put to Death, and be raiſed again. Whereby we may perceive, how little yet Jeſus had explained to the Apoſtles what Perſonally concerned himſelf. They had been a good while witneſſes of his Life and Miracles; and thereby being grown into a belief that he was the *Meſſiah*, were in ſome degree prepared to receive the Particulars that were to fill up that Character, and anſwer the Propheſies concerning him; Which from *henceforth* he began to open to them, (though in a way which the Jews could not form an Accuſation out of) The time of the accompliſhment of all, in his Sufferings, Death, and Reſurrection, now drawing on. For this was in the laſt Year of his Life; he being to meet the Jews at

Jeru-

Jeruſalem but once more at the Paſſover, who then ſhould have their will upon him; And therefore he might now begin to be a little more open concerning himſelf: Though yet ſo, as to keep himſelf out of the reach of any Accuſation, that might appear Juſt or Weighty to the *Roman* Deputy.

After his Reprimand to *Peter*, telling him That he *ſavoured not the things of God, but of man*; *Mark* VIII. 34. He calls the People to him, and prepares thoſe, who would be his Diſciples, for Suffering; Telling them, *v.* 38. *Whoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and my words in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with the holy Angels*: And then ſubjoyns, *Mat.* XVI. 27, 28. two great and ſolemn Acts, wherein he would ſhew himſelf to be the *Meſſiah* the King: *For the Son of Man ſhall come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels; and then he ſhall render every man according to his works.* This is evidently meant of the Glorious Appearance of his Kingdom, when he ſhall come to Judge the World at the laſt day; Deſcribed more

more at large, *Mat* XXV. *When the Son of Man ſhall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the* THRONE *of his Glory. Then ſhall the* KING *ſay to them on his right hand*, &c.

But what follows in the place above quoted, *Mat.* XVI. 28. *Verily, verily, there be ſome ſtanding here, who ſhall not taſt of Death, till they ſee the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom*; Importing that Dominion, which ſome there ſhould ſee him exerciſe over the Nation of the Jews, was ſo covered; by being annexed to the preceding *v.* 27. (where he ſpoke of the Manifeſtation and Glory of his Kingdom at the day of Judgment) That though his plain meaning here in *v.* 28. be, that the appearance and viſible exerciſe of his Kingly Power in his Kingdom was ſo near, that ſome there ſhould live to ſee it; Yet if the foregoing words had not caſt a ſhadow over theſe later, but they had been left plainly to be underſtood, as they plainly ſignified, that he ſhould be a King; And that it was ſo near, that ſome there ſhould ſee him in his Kingdom; This might have been laid hold on, and made

made the matter of a plauſible and ſeemingly juſt Accuſation againſt him, by the Jews, before *Pilate*. This ſeems to be the reaſon of our Saviour's inverting here the order of the two Solemn Manifeſtations to the World of his Rule and Power; thereby perplexing at preſent his meaning, and ſecuring himſelf, as was neceſſary, from the malice of the Jews, which always lay at catch to intrap him, and accuſe him to the *Roman* Governour; And would, no doubt, have been ready to have alledged theſe words, *Some here ſhall not taſt of Death, till they ſee the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom*, againſt him, as Criminal; had not their meaning been, by the former Verſe, perplexed, and the ſenſe at that time rendred unintelligible, and not applicable by any of his Auditors to a ſenſe that might have been prejudicial to him before the *Roman* Governour. For how well the Chief of the Jews were diſpoſed towards him, St. *Luke* tells us, *Chap.* XI. 54. *Laying wait for him, and ſeeking to catch ſomething out of his mouth, that they might accuſe him:* Which may be a reaſon to ſatisfie us of the ſeemingly

doubtful

doubtful and obſcure way of ſpeaking uſed by our Saviour in other places; His Circumſtances being ſuch, that without ſuch a Prudent carriage and reſervedneſs, he could not have gone through the Work which he came to do; Nor have perſormed all the parts of it, in a way correſpondent to the Deſcriptions given of the *Meſſiah*, and which ſhould be afterwards fully underſtood to belong to him, when he had left the World.

After this, *Mat.* XVII. 10, *&c.* He, without ſaying it in direct words, begins, as it were, to own himſelf to his Apoſtles to be the *Meſſiah*; by aſſuring them, that as the Scribes, according to the Prophecy of *Malachy*, *Chap.* IV. 5. rightly ſaid, that *Elias* was to Uſher in the *Meſſiah*; So indeed *Elias* was already come, though the Jews knew him not, and treated him ill: Whereby *They underſtood that he ſpoke to them of* John *the* Baptiſt, *v.* 13. And a little after he ſomewhat more plainly intimates that he is the *Meſſiah*, Mark IX. 41. in theſe words: *Whoſoever ſhall give you a cup of water to drink in my Name, becauſe ye belong to the Meſſiah.*

This,

This, as I remember, is the firſt place where our Saviour ever mentioned the name of *Meſſiah*; and the firſt time that he went ſo far towards the owning, to any of the Jewiſh Nation, himſelf to be him.

In his way to *Jeruſalem*, bidding one follow him, *Luke* IX. 59. who would firſt bury his Father, *v.*60. *Jeſus ſaid unto him, let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God.* And *Luke* X.1. Sending out the Seventy Diſciples, he ſays to them, *v.* 9. *Heal the ſick, and ſay, the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.* He had nothing elſe for theſe, or for his Apoſtles, or any one, it ſeems, to Preach; but the good News of the coming of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah.* And if any City would not receive them, he bids them, *v.* 10. *Go into the ſtreets of the ſame, and ſay, Even the very duſt of your City, which cleaveth on us, do we wipe off againſt you: Notwithſtanding, be ye ſure of this, that the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.* This they were to take notice of, as that which they ſhould dearly anſwer for; *viz.* That they had not with Faith received the good Tidings

Tidings of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*.

After this, his Brethren ſay unto him, *John* VII. 2,3,4. (The Feaſt of Tabernacles being near) *Depart hence, and go into* Judea, *that thy Diſciples alſo may ſee the works that thou doeſt: For there is no man that does any thing in ſecret, and he himſelf ſeeketh to be known openly. If thou do theſe things, ſhew thy ſelf to the World.* Here his Brethren, which the next Verſe tells us *did not believe in him*, ſeem to upbraid him with the inconſiſtency of his carriage; as if he deſigned to be received for the *Meſſiah*, and yet was afraid to ſhew himſelf: To whom he juſtified his Conduct, (mentioned *v.* 1.) in the following verſes; by telling them, *That the World* (meaning the Jews eſpecially) *hated him, becauſe he teſtified of it, that the works thereof are evil; And that his time was not yet fully come*, wherein to quit his reſerve, and abandon himſelf freely to their Malice and Fury: And therefore, though he *went up unto the Feaſt*, it was *not openly; but as it were in ſecret*, *v.* 10. And here coming into the Temple about the middle of the Feaſt,

Feaſt, he juſtifies his being ſent from God; And that he had not done any thing againſt the Law in curing the man at the Pool of *Bethesday*, *v. John* V. 1—16. on the Sabbath-day; Which, though done above a year and an half before, they made uſe of as a pretence to deſtroy him. But what was the true reaſon of ſeeking his Life, appears from what we have in this VII. *Chapter*, *v.* 25—34. *Then ſaid ſome of them at* Jeruſalem, *Is not this he whom they ſeek to kill? But lo, he ſpeaketh boldly, and they ſay nothing unto him. Do the Rulers know indeed that this is the very Meſſiah? Howbeit, we know this man whence he is; But when the Meſſiah cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. Then cryed Jeſus in the Temple, as he taught, ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: And I am not come of my ſelf, but he that ſent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him, for I am from him, and he hath ſent me. Then they ſought* [an occaſion] *to take him, but no man laid hands on him, becauſe his hour was not yet come. And many of the people believed on him, and ſaid, when the Meſſiah cometh, will he do more miracles than theſe which this man*

man hath done? The Phariſees heard that the people murmured ſuch things concerning him; and the Phariſees and Chief Prieſts ſent Officers to take him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go to him that ſent me: Ye ſhall ſeek me, and not find me; and where I am there ye cannot come. Then ſaid the Jews among themſelves, Whither will he go, that we ſhall not find him? Here we find that the great fault in our Saviour, and the great Provocation to the Jews, was his being taken for the *Meſſiah*; and doing ſuch things as made the People *believe in him*; *i. e.* believe that he was the *Meſſiah*. Here alſo our Saviour declares, in words very eaſie to be underſtood, at leaſt after his Reſurrection, that he was the *Meſſiah*: For if he were *ſent from God*, and did his Miracles by the Spirit of God, there could be no doubt but he was the *Meſſiah*. But yet this Declaration was in a way that the Phariſees and Prieſts could not lay hold on to make an Accuſation of, to the diſturbance of his Miniſtry, or the ſeizure of his Perſon, how much ſoever they deſired it: For his time was

not yet come. The Officers they had ſent to Apprehend him, charmed with his Diſcourſe, returned without laying hands on him, *v.* 45, 46. And when the Chief Prieſts asked them, *Why they brought him not?* They anſwered, *Never man ſpake like this man.* Whereupon the Phariſees reply, *Are ye alſo deceived? Have any of the Rulers, or of the Phariſees believed on him? But this people, who know not the Law, are curſed.* This ſhews what was meant by *Believing on him*; *viz.* believing that he was the *Meſſiah*. For, ſay they, have any of the Rulers, who are skilled in the Law, or of the Devout and learned Phariſees, acknowledged him to be the *Meſſiah?* For as for thoſe who in the Diviſion among the People concerning him, ſay, *That he is the Meſſiah*, they are ignorant and vile wretches, know nothing of the Scripture, and being accurſed, are given up by God to be deceived by this Impoſtor, and to take him for the *Meſſiah*. Therefore, notwithſtanding their deſire to lay hold on him, he goes on; And *v.* 37, 38. *In the laſt and great day of the Feaſt, Jeſus ſtood and cryed, ſaying,*

ſaying; If any man thirſt, let him come unto me and drink: He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath ſaid, out of his belly ſhall flow Rivers of living water. And thus he here again declares himſelf to be the *Meſſiah*; But in the Prophetick ſtile; As we may ſee by the next Verſe of this Chapter, and thoſe places in the Old Teſtament that theſe words of our Saviour refer to.

In the next Chapter, *John* VIII. all that he ſays concerning himſelf, and what they were to believe, tends to this; *viz.* That he was ſent from God his Father; And that if they did not believe that he was the *Meſſiah*, they ſhould die in their ſins: But this in a way, as St. *John* obſerves, *v.* 27. that they did not well underſtand. But our Saviour himſelf tells them, *v.* 28. *When ye have lift up the Son of Man, then ſhall ye know that I am he.*

Going from them, he Cures the Man born blind, whom meeting with again, after the Jews had queſtioned him, and caſt him out, *John* IX. 35—38. Jeſus *ſaid to him, Doſt thou believe on the Son of God? He anſwered, who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?*

And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou haſt both ſeen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he ſaid, Lord, I believe. Here we ſee this man is pronounced a Believer, when all that was propoſed to him to believe, was, that Jeſus was *the Son of God*; Which was, as we have already ſhewn, to believe that he was the *Meſſiah*.

In the next Chapter, *John* X. 1—21. he declares the laying down of his Life for both Jews and Gentiles; But in a Parable, which they underſtood not, *v.* 6. 20.

As he was going to the Feaſt of the Dedication, the Phariſees ask him, *Luke* XVII. 20. *When the Kingdom of God, i. e.* of the *Meſſiah, ſhould come?* He anſwers, that it ſhould not come with Pomp, and Obſervation, and great Concourſe; But that it was already begun amongſt them. If he had ſtopt here, the ſenſe had been ſo plain, that they could hardly have miſtaken him; or have doubted, but that he meant, that the *Meſſiah* was already come, and amongſt them; And ſo might have been prone to infer, that Jeſus took upon him to be him. But here, as in the

the place before taken notice of, ſubjoyning to this the future Revelation of himſelf, both in his coming to execute Vengeance on the Jews, and in his coming to Judgment mixed together, he ſo involved his ſenſe, that it was not eaſie to underſtand him. And therefore the Jews came to him again in the Temple, *John* X. 23. and ſaid, *How long doſt thou make us doubt? If thou be the Chriſt tell us plainly. Jeſus anſwered, I told you, and ye* BELIEVED *not: The works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear witneſs of me. But ye* BELIEVED *not, becauſe ye are not of my ſheep, as I told you.* The BELIEVING here, which he accuſes them of not doing, is plainly their not BELIEVING him to be the *Meſſiah*, as the foregoing words evince, and in the ſame ſenſe it is evidently meant in the following Verſes of this Chapter.

From hence *Jeſus* going to *Bethabara*, and thence returning to *Bethany*; upon *Lazarus*'s Death, *John* XI. 25—27. Jeſus ſaid to *Martha*, *I am the Reſurrection and the Life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet he ſhall*

live; and whoſoever liveth, and believeth in me, ſhall not die for ever. So I underſtand ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, anſwerable to ζήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα of the *Septuagint*, *Gen.* III. 22. or *John* VI. 51. which we read right in our *Engliſh* Tranſlation, *Live for ever.* But whether this ſaying of our Saviour here can with truth be tranſlated, *He that liveth and believeth in me, ſhall never die*, will be apt to be queſtioned. But to go on. *Believeſt thou this? She ſaid unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the* Meſſiah, *the Son of God, which ſhould come into the World.* This ſhe gives as a full Anſwer to our Saviour's Demands; This being that Faith, which whoever had, wanted no more to make them Believers.

We may obſerve farther, in this ſame ſtory of the raiſing of *Lazarus*, what Faith it was our Saviour expected; by what he ſays, *v.* 41, 42. *Father, I thank thee that thou haſt heard me. And I know that thou heareſt me always. But becauſe of the people who ſtand by, I ſaid it, that they may believe that thou haſt ſent me.* And what the Conſequence of it was, we may ſee, *v.* 45. *Then many*

many of the Jews who came to Mary, *and had ſeen the things which Jeſus did, believed on him:* Which belief was, that he was *ſent from the Father*; which in other words was, that he was the *Meſſiah*. That this is the meaning, in the Evangeliſts, of the Phraſe of *believing on him*, we have a demonſtration in the following words, *v.* 47, 48. *Then gathered the Chief Prieſts and Phariſees a Council, and ſaid, what do we? For this man does many miracles; And if we let him alone, all men will* BELIEVE ON HIM. Thoſe who here ſay, all men would BELIEVE ON HIM, were the Chief Prieſts and Phariſees his Enemies; who ſought his Life; and therefore could have no other ſenſe nor thought of this Faith in him, which they ſpake of, but only the believing him to be the *Meſſiah*: And that that was their meaning, the adjoyning words ſhew. *If we let him alone, all the World will believe on him*; *i. e.* believe him to be the *Meſſiah*. *And the* Romans *will come and take away both our Place and Nation.* Which Reaſoning of theirs was thus grounded. If we ſtand ſtill, and let the People

Believe on him, *i. e.* receive him for the *Messiah*; They will thereby take him and set him up for their King, and expect Deliverance by him; Which will draw the *Roman* Arms upon us, to the Destruction of us and our Country. The *Romans* could not be thought to be at at all concerned in any other Belief whatsoever, that the People might have in him. It is therefore plain, That *Believing on him*, was, by the Writers of the Gospel, understood to mean, *the believing him to be the Messiah*. *The* Sanhedrim *therefore*, v. 53, 54. *from that day forth consulted for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked not yet* (for so the word ἐν signifies, and so I think it ought here to be translated) *boldly*, or open-fac'd *among the Jews*; *i. e.* of *Jerusalem*. ἐν cannot well here be translated *no more*, because within a very short time after, he appeared openly at the Passover, and by his Miracles and Speech declared himself more freely than ever he had done; And all the Week before his Passion Taught daily in the Temple, *Mat.* XX. 17. *Mark* X. 32. *Luke* XVIII. 31, &c. The meaning of this place seems

ſeems therefore to be this: That his time being not yet come, he durſt not yet ſhew himſelf openly, and confidently, before the Scribes and Phariſees, and thoſe of the *Sanhedrim* at *Jeruſalem*, who were full of Malice againſt him, and had reſolved his Death; *But went thence unto a Country near the Wilderneſs, into a City called* Ephraim, *and there continued with his Diſciples*, to keep himſelf out of the way till the Paſſover, *which was nigh at hand*, *v.* 55. In his return thither, he takes the Twelve aſide, and tells them before hand what ſhould happen to him at *Jeruſalem*, whither they were now going; And that all things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of Man, ſhould be accompliſhed. That he ſhould be betrayed to the Chief Prieſts and Scribes; And that they ſhould Condemn him to Death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; That he ſhould be mocked, and ſpit on, and ſcourged, and put to Death; and the third day he ſhould riſe again. But St. *Luke* tells us, *Chap.* XVIII. 34. That the Apoſtles *underſtood none of theſe things, and this ſaying was hid from them*;

them; neither knew they the things which were ſpoken. They believed him to be the Son of God, the *Meſſiah* ſent from the Father; But their Notion of the *Meſſiah* was the ſame with the reſt of the Jews; That he ſhould be a Temporal Prince and Deliverer. That which diſtinguiſhed them from the Unbelieving Jews, was, That they believed Jeſus to be the very *Meſſiah*, and ſo received him as their King and Lord accordingly. We ſee, *Mark* X. 35. That even in this their laſt Journey with him to *Jeruſalem*, two of them, *James* and *John*, coming to him, and falling at his Feet, ſaid, *Grant unto us, that we may ſit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy Glory*; Or, as St. *Matthew* has it, *Chap.* XX. 21. *in thy Kingdom.*

And now the hour being come that the Son of Man ſhould be glorified, he, without his uſual Reſerve, makes his Publick Entry into *Jeruſalem*, *Riding on a Young Aſs; As it is written, Fear not, Daughter of* Sion, *behold, thy King cometh ſitting on an Aſſes Colt.* But *theſe things*, ſays St. *John*, *Chap.* XII. 16. *his Diſciples underſtood not at the firſt;*

But

But when Jeſus was glorified, then remembred they that theſe things were written of him, and that they had done theſe things unto him. Though the Apoſtles believed him to be the *Meſſiah*, yet there were many Occurrences of his Life which they underſtood not, at the time when they happened, to be fore-told of the *Meſſiah*; which after his Aſcenſion they found exactly to quadrate. *And all the People crying* Hoſanna, *Bleſſed is the King of* Iſrael, *that cometh in the Name of the Lord*; This was ſo open a Declaration of his being the *Meſſiah*, that *Luke* XIX. 39. *Some of the Phariſees from among the multitude ſaid unto him, Maſter, rebuke thy Diſciples.* But he was ſo far from ſtopping them, or diſowning this their Acknowledgment of his being the *Meſſiah*, That he *ſaid unto them, I tell you, that if theſe ſhould hold their peace, the ſtones would immediately cry out.* And again, upon the like occaſion of their crying *Hoſanna, to the Son of David*, in the Temple, *Mat.* XXI. 15, 16. When *the Chief Prieſts and Scribes were ſore diſpleaſed, and ſaid unto him, Heareſt thou what they ſay? Jeſus ſaid unto them,*

them, yea; Have ye never read, Out of the mouths of Babes and Sucklings thou haſt perfected Praiſe? And now, *v.* 14, 15. *He cures the Blind and the Lame* openly *in the Temple. And when the Chief Prieſts and Scribes ſaw the wonderful things that he did, and the Children crying in the Temple* Hoſanna, *they were enraged.* One would not think, that after the multitude of Miracles that our Saviour had now been doing for above three Years together, that the curing the Lame and Blind ſhould ſo much move them. But we muſt remember, that though his Miniſtry had abounded with Miracles, yet the moſt of them had been done about *Galilee*, and in Parts remote from *Jeruſalem*: There is but one left upon Record hitherto done in that City; And that had ſo ill a Reception, that they ſought his Life for it; as we may read, *John* V. 16. And therefore we hear not of his being at the next Paſſover, becauſe he was there only privately, as an ordinary Jew: The reaſon whereof we may read, *John* VII. 1. *After theſe things, Jeſus walked in* Galilee, *for he would not walk in* Jewry, *becauſe the Jews ſought to kill him.* Hence

Hence we may gueſs the reaſon why *St. John* omitted the mention of his being at *Jeruſalem* at the third Paſſover after his Baptiſm; probably becauſe he did nothing memorable there. Indeed, when he was at the Feaſt of Tabernacles, immediately preceding this his laſt Paſſover, he cured the Man born blind: But it appears not to have been done in *Jeruſalem* it ſelf, but in the way as he retired to the Mount of *Olives*; for there ſeems to have been no body by, when he did it, but his Apoſtles. Compare *v.*2. with *v.* 8.10. of *John* IX. This, at leaſt, is remarkable; That neither the Cure of this Blind Man, nor that of the other Infirm Man, at the Paſſover above a twelve Month before at *Jeruſalem*, was done in the ſight of the Scribes, Phariſees, Chief Prieſts, or Rulers. Nor was it without reaſon, that in the former part of his Miniſtry he was cautious of ſhewing himſelf to be the *Meſſiah*; And by repeated Miracles done in their ſight before the People, of provoking the Rulers in *Jeruſalem*, where he was in their Power. But now that he was come to the laſt Scene of his Life, and that the Paſſover

was

was come, the appointed time wherein he was to compleat the Work he came for, in his Death and Reſurrection, he does many things in *Jeruſalem* it ſelf, before the face of the Scribes, Phariſees, and whole Body of the Jewiſh Nation, to manifeſt himſelf to be the *Meſſiah*. And, as St. *Luke* ſays, *Chap.* XIX. 47, 48. *He taught daily in the Temple: But the Chief Prieſts, and the Scribes, and the Chief of the People ſought to deſtroy him; And could not find what they might do, for all the People were very attentive to hear him.* What he taught, we are not left to gueſs, by what we have found him conſtantly Preaching elſewhere; (the Kingdom of God's being come, and requiring Repentance.) But St. *Luke* tells us, *Chap.* XX. 1. *He taught in the Temple, and Evangelized*; Or, as we tranſlate it, *preached the Goſpel*: Which, as we have ſhewed, was the making known to them the Good News of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*. And this we ſhall find he did, in what now remains of his Hiſtory.

In the firſt Diſcourſe of his, which we find upon Record after this, *John* XII. 20, *&c.* he fore-tells his Crucifixion;

fixion; and the belief of all ſorts, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, on him after that. Whereupon the People ſay to him, *v.* 34. *We have heard out of the Law, that the Meſſiah abideth for ever; And how ſayeſt thou, that the Son of Man muſt be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?* In his Anſwer he plainly deſigns himſelf, under the Name of *Light*; which was what he had declared himſelf to them to be, the laſt time that they had ſeen him in *Jeruſalem*. For then at the Feaſt of Tabernacles, but ſix Months before, he tells them in the very place where he now is, *viz.* in the Temple, *I am the Light of the World; whoſoever follows me, ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of Life*; As we may read, *John* VIII. 12. & IX. 5. He ſays, *As long as I am in the World, I am the LIGHT of the World*. But neither here, nor any where elſe, does he, even in theſe four or five laſt days of his Life (though he knew his hour was come, and was prepared for his Death, *v.* 27. And ſcrupled not to manifeſt himſelf to the Rulers of the Jews to be the *Meſſiah*, by doing Miracles before them in the Temple)

ple) ever once in direct words own himſelf to the Jews to be the *Meſſiah*; Though by Miracles, and other ways, he did every where make it known to them, ſo that it might be underſtood. This could not be without ſome Reaſon; And the Preſervation of his Life, which he came now to *Jeruſalem* on purpoſe to lay down, could not be it. What other could it then be, but the ſame which had made him uſe Caution in the former part of his Miniſtry; ſo to conduct himſelf, that he might do the Work which he came for, and in all parts anſwer the Character given of the *Meſſiah* in the Law and the Prophets? He had fulfilled the time of his Miniſtry; and now Taught, and did Miracles openly in the Temple, before the Rulers and the People, not fearing to be ſeized. But he would not be ſeized for any thing that might make him a Criminal to the Government; And therefore he avoided giving thoſe, who in the Diviſion that was about him enclined towards him, occaſion of Tumult for his ſake; Or to the Jews his Enemies, matter of Juſt Accuſation againſt him out of his own mouth, by

profeſ-

profeſſing himſelf to be the *Meſſiah*, the King of *Iſrael* in direct words. It was enough, that by words and deeds he declared it ſo to them, that they could not but underſtand him; Which 'tis plain they did, *Luke* XX. 16. 19. *Mat.* XXI. 45. But yet neither his Actions, which were only doing of Good; nor Words, which were Myſtical and Parabolical; (As we may ſee, *Mat.* XXI. & XXII. And the Parallel places of *Matthew* and *Luke*;) Nor any of his ways of making himſelf known to be the *Meſſiah*; could be brought in Teſtimony, or urged againſt him, as oppoſite or dangerous to the Government. This preſerved him from being Condemned as a Malefactor; and procured him a Teſtimony from the *Roman* Governour his Judge, that he was an Innocent Man, ſacrificed to the Envy of the *Jewiſh* Nation. So that he avoided ſaying that he was the *Meſſiah*, that to thoſe who would reflect on his Life and Death after his Reſurrection, he might the more clearly appear to be ſo. It is farther to be remarked, that though he often appeals to the Teſtimony of his Miracles who he is, yet he never

tells the *Jews* that he was born at *Bethlehem*; to remove the Prejudice that lay againſt him, whilſt he paſſed for a *Galilean*, and which was urged as a Proof that he was not the *Meſſiah*, *John* VII. 41, 42. The healing of the Sick, and doing of Good miraculouſly, could be no Crime in him, nor Accuſation againſt him. But the naming of *Bethlehem* for his Birth-place, might have wrought as much upon the mind of *Pilate*, as it did on *Herod*'s; and have raiſed a Suſpicion in him as Prejudicial to his Innocence, as *Herod*'s was to the Children born there. His pretending to be born at *Bethlehem*, as it was liable to be explained by the *Jews*, could not have failed to have met with a ſiniſter Interpretation in the *Roman* Governour, and have rendred *Jeſus* ſuſpected of ſome Criminal Deſign againſt the Government. And hence we ſee, that when *Pilate* asked him, *John* XIX. 9. *Whence art thou? Jeſus gave him no anſwer.*

Whether our Saviour had not an Eye to this ſtraitneſs, this narrow room that was left to his Conduct, between the new Converts and the captious Jews,

Jews, when he ſays, *Luke* XII. 50. *I have a Baptiſm to be baptized with, and* πῶς συνέχομαι *how am I ſtraitned till it be accompliſhed*, I leave to be conſidered. *I am come to ſend fire on the Earth*, ſays our Saviour, *and what if it be already kindled? i. e.* There begin already to be Diviſions about me, *v. John* VII. 12. 43. & IX. 16. & X. 19. And I have not the freedom, the Latitude, to declare my ſelf openly as I am, the *Meſſiah*, till after my Death. My way to my Throne is cloſely hedged in on every ſide, and much ſtraitned, within which I muſt keep, till it bring me to my Croſs; in its due time and manner, ſo that it do not cut ſhort the time, nor croſs the end of my Miniſtry.

And therefore to keep up this inoffenſive Character, and not to let it come within the reach of Accident or Calumny, he withdrew with his Apoſtles out of the Town every Evening; and kept himſelf retired out of the way, *Luke* XXI. 37. *And in the daytime he was teaching in the Temple, and every night he went out and abode in the Mount that is called the Mount of Olives*;

That he might avoid all Concourſe to him in the Night, and give no occaſion of Diſturbance, or Suſpicion of himſelf in that great conflux of the whole Nation of the *Jews*, now aſſembled in *Jeruſalem* at the Paſſover.

But to return to his Preaching in the Temple. He bids them, *John* XII. 36. *To believe in the light whilſt they have it.* And he tells them, *v.* 46. *I am the light come into the World, that every one who believes in me ſhould not remain in darkneſs.* Which believing in him, was the believing him to be the *Meſſiah*, as I have elſewhere ſhewed.

The next day, *Mat.* XXI. he rebukes them for not having believed *John* the *Baptiſt*, who had teſtified that he was the *Meſſiah*. And then, in a Parable, declares himſelf to be the *Son of God*, whom they ſhould deſtroy; And that for it God would take away the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* from them, and give it to the Gentiles. That they underſtood him thus, is plain from *Luke* XX. 16. *And when they heard it, they ſaid, God forbid.* And *v.* 19. *For they knew that he had ſpoken this Parable againſt them.*

Much

Much to the ſame purpoſe was his next Parable concerning *the Kingdom of Heaven*, *Mat.* XXII. 1—10. That the Jews not accepting of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, to whom it was firſt offered, others ſhould be brought in.

The Scribes and Phariſees, and Chief Prieſts, not able to bear the declaration he made of himſelf to be the *Meſſiah*; (by his Diſcourſes and Miracles *before* them, ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν, *John* XII. 37. which he had never done before) impatient of his Preaching and Miracles; and being not able otherwiſe to ſtop the increaſe of his Followers; (For, *ſaid the Phariſees among themſelves, perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the World is gone after him*, *John* XII. 19. So that *the Chief Prieſts, and the Scribes, and the Chief of the People*) *ſought to deſtroy him*, the firſt day of his entrance into *Jeruſalem*, *Luke* XIX. 47. The next day again they were intent upon the ſame thing, *Mark* XI. 17, 18. *And he taught* in the Temple; *And the Scribes, and the Chief Prieſts heard it, and ſought how they might deſtroy him; For they feared him, becauſe all the people were aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine.*

The next day but one, upon his telling them the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* ſhould be taken from them; *The Chief Prieſts and Scribes ſought to lay hands on him the ſame hour; and they feared the People*, Luke XX. 19. If they had ſo great a deſire to lay hold on him, why did they not? They were the Chief Prieſts and the Rulers, the men of Power. The reaſon St. *Luke* plainly tells us, in the next Verſe: *And they watched him, and ſent forth Spies, which ſhould feign themſelves juſt men, that they might take hold of his words; that ſo they might deliver him unto the Power and Authority of the Governour.* They wanted matter of Accuſation, againſt him, to the Power they were under. That they watched for; and that they would have been glad of, if they could have *entangled him in his talk*; As St. *Matthew* expreſſes it, *Chap.* XXII. 15. If they could have laid hold on any word that had dropt from him, that might have rendred him guilty or ſuſpected to the *Roman* Governour; That would have ſerved their turn, to have laid hold upon him, with hopes to deſtroy him. For their Power not anſwering

ſwering their Malice, they could not put him to Death by their own Authority, without the Permiſſion and Aſſiſtance of the Governour; as they confeſs, *John* XVIII. 31. *It is not lawful for us to put any man to Death.* This made them ſo earneſt for a declaration in direct words, from his own mouth, that he was the *Meſſiah*. 'Twas not that they would more have believed in him, for ſuch a declaration of himſelf, than they did for his Miracles, or other ways of making himſelf known, which it appears they underſtood well enough. But they wanted plain direct words, ſuch as might ſupport an Accuſation, and be of weight before an Heathen Judge. This was the Reaſon why they preſſed him to ſpeak out, *John* X. 24. *Then came the Jews round about him, and ſaid unto him, How long doſt thou hold us in ſuſpenſe? If thou be the Meſſiah, tell us* PLAINLY, παῤῥησίᾳ; *i. e.* in direct words: For that St. *John* uſes it in that ſenſe, we may ſee, *Chap.* XI. 11—14. Jeſus ſaith to them, *Lazarus ſleepeth.* His Diſciples ſaid, *If he ſleeps, he ſhall do well. Howbeit, Jeſus ſpake of his Death; but they*

thought he had ſpoken of taking of reſt in ſleep. Then ſaid Jeſus to them plainly, παῤῥησία, Lazarus *is dead.* Here we ſee what is meant by παῤῥησία, PLAIN direct words, ſuch as expreſs the thing without a Figure; And ſo they would have had Jeſus pronounce himſelf to be the *Meſſiah.* And the ſame thing they preſs again, *Mat.* XVI. 63. The High-Prieſt adjuring him by the Living God, to tell them whether he were the *Meſſiah,* the Son of God; As we ſhall have occaſion to take notice by and by.

This we may obſerve in the whole management of their Deſign againſt his Life. It turned upon this; That they wanted and wiſhed for a Declaration from him, in direct words, that he was the *Meſſiah:* Something from his own mouth, that might offend the *Roman* Power, and render him Criminal to *Pilate.* In the 21*ſt.* Verſe of this XX of *Luke, They asked him, ſaying, Maſter, we know that thou ſayeſt and teacheſt rightly; neither accepteſt thou the Perſon of any, but teacheſt the way of God truly. Is it lawful for us to give Tribute to* Cæſar *or no?* By this captious Queſtion they hoped to catch him, which

which way ſoever he anſwered. For if he had ſaid, they ought to pay Tribute to *Cæſar*, 'twould be plain he allowed their Subjection to the *Romans*; And ſo in effect diſowned himſelf to be their King and Deliverer: Whereby he would have contradicted, what his Carriage and Doctrine ſeemed to aim at, the Opinion that was ſpread amongſt the People, that he was the *Meſſiah*. This would have quaſh'd the Hopes, and deſtroyed the Faith of thoſe who believed on him; and have turned the Ears and Hearts of the People from him. If on the other ſide, he anſwered *No*, it is not Lawful to pay Tribute to *Cæſar*; they had had out of his own mouth wherewithal to Condemn him before *Pontius Pilate*. But St. *Luke* tells us, *v.* 23. *He perceived their Craftineſs, and ſaid unto them, Why tempt ye me? i.e.* Why do ye lay Snares for me? *Ye Hypocrites, ſhew me the Tribute-money*; So it is, *Mat.* XXII. 19. *Whoſe Image and Inſcription has it? They ſaid*, Cæſar's. *He ſaid unto them, Render therefore to* Cæſar *the things that are* Cæſar's; *and to God the things that are God's.* By the Wiſdom and Caution of which unexpected

pected Anſwer, he defeated their whole Deſign. *And they could not take hold of his words before the People; And they marvelled at his anſwer, and held their peace*, Luke XX. 26. *And leaving him, they departed*, *Mat.* XXII. 22.

He having by this Reply, (and what he anſwered to the *Sadducees* concerning the Reſurrection, And to the *Lawyer*, about the Firſt Commandment, *Mark* XII.) Anſwered ſo little to their Satisfaction or Advantage; they durſt ask him no more Queſtions, any of them. And now their mouths being ſtop'd, he himſelf begins to Queſtion them about the *Meſſiah*; Asking the *Phariſees*, Mat. XXII. 41. *What think ye of the Meſſiah, whoſe Son is he? They ſay unto him, The Son of David.* Wherein, though they anſwered right, yet he ſhews them in the following words, that however they pretended to be Studiers and Teachers of the Law, yet they underſtood not clearly the Scriptures concerning the *Meſſiah*; And thereupon he ſharply rebukes their Hypocriſie, Vanity, Pride, Malice, Covetouſneſs, and Ignorance; And particularly tells them, v. 13. *Ye ſhut up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt men,*

men: For ye neither go in your ſelves, nor ſuffer ye them that are entring to go in. Whereby he plainly declares to them, that the *Meſſiah* was come, and his Kingdom began; But that they refuſed to believe in him themſelves, and did all they could to hinder others from believing in him; As is manifeſt throughout the New Teſtament: The Hiſtory whereof ſufficiently explains what is meant here by *The Kingdom of Heaven*, Which the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* would neither go into themſelves, nor ſuffer others to enter into. And they could not chooſe but underſtand him, though he named not himſelf in the caſe.

Provoked anew by his Rebukes, they get preſently to Council, *Mat.* XXVI. *Then aſſembled together the Chief Prieſt, and the Scribes, and the Elders of the People, unto the Palace of the High-Prieſt, who was called* Caiphas, *and conſulted that they might take Jeſus by ſubtilty, and kill him. But they ſaid, Not on the Feaſt-day, leſt there be an Uproar among the People. For they feared the People*, ſays St. *Luke*, *Chap.* XXII. 2.

Having in the Night got Jeſus into their Hands, by the Treachery of *Judas*,

das, they preſently led him away bound to *Annas* the High-Prieſt, *John* XVIII. 13. 19. *The High-Prieſt then asked Jeſus of his Diſciples, and of his Doctrine. Jeſus anſwered him, I ſpake openly to the World; I ever taught in the Synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jews always reſort; And in ſecret have I ſaid nothing.* A Proof that he had not in private to his Diſciples declared himſelf in expreſs words to be the *Meſſiah*, the Prince. But he goes on. *Why askeſt thou me?* Ask *Judas*, who has been always with me. *Ask them who heard me, what I have ſaid unto them; behold, they know what I ſaid.* Our Saviour we ſee here warily declines, for the Reaſons above mentioned, all Diſcourſe of his Doctrine. *Annas* getting nothing out of him for his turn, *v.* 24. ſends him away to *Caiphas*, and the *Sanhedrim*; who, *Mat.* XXVI. 59. *Sought falſe Witneſs againſt him*: But when they found none that were ſufficient, or came up to the Point they deſired; which was to have ſomething againſt him to take away his Life, (For ſo I think the words ἵνα and ὅπως mean, *Mark* XIV. 56. 59.) They try again what

what they can get out of him himſelf, concerning his being the *Meſſiah*; Which if he owned in expreſs words, they thought they ſhould have enough againſt him at the Tribunal of the *Roman* Governour, to make him *Læſæ Majeſtatis reum*, and ſo to take away his Life. They therefore ſay to him, *Luke* XXII. 67. *If thou be the Meſſiah, tell us.* Nay, as St. *Matthew* hath it, the High-Prieſt adjures him by the Living God to tell them whether he were the *Meſſiah*. To which our Saviour replies: *If I tell you, ye will not believe; And if I ask you, ye will not anſwer me, nor let me go.* If I tell you, and prove to you, by the Teſtimony given of me from Heaven, and by the Works that I have done among you, you will not believe in me, that I am the *Meſſiah*. Or if I ſhould ask you where the *Meſſiah* is to be Born; and what State he ſhould come in; how he ſhould appear, and other things that you think in me are not reconcileable with the *Meſſiah*; You will not anſwer me, and let me go, as one that has no pretence to be the *Meſſiah*, and you are not afraid ſhould be received for ſuch. But yet

I tell

I tell you, *Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the Power of God*, v. 70. *Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, ye say that I am.* By which Discourse with them, related at large here by St. *Luke*, it is plain, that the Answer of our Saviour, set down by St. *Matthew*, *Chap.* XXVI. 64. in these words, *Thou hast said*; And by St. *Mark*, *Chap.* XIV. 62. in these, *I am*; Is an Answer only to this Question, *Art thou then the Son of God?* And not to that other, *Art thou the Messiah?* Which preceded, and he had answered to before: Though *Matthew* and *Mark*, contracting the story, set them down together, as if making but one Question; omitting all the intervening Discourse; Whereas 'tis plain out of St. *Luke*, that they were two distinct Questions, to which *Jesus* gave two distinct Answers. In the first whereof, he, according to his usual Caution, declined saying in plain express words, that he was the *Messiah*; though in the latter he owned himself to be *the Son of God*. Which, though they being *Jews*, understood to signifie the *Messiah*; Yet he knew

knew could be no Legal or Weighty Accuſation againſt him before a Heathen; and ſo it proved. For upon his anſwering to their Queſtion, *Art thou then the Son of God? Ye ſay that I am*; They cry out, *Luke* XXII. 71. *What need we any further witneſſes? For we our ſelves have heard out of his own mouth:* And ſo thinking they had enough againſt him, they hurry him away to *Pilate*. *Pilate* asking them, *John* XVIII. 29—32. *What Accuſation bring you againſt this man? They anſwered, and ſaid, if he were not a Malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.* Then ſaid *Pilate* unto them, *Take ye him, and Judge him according to your Law.* But this would not ſerve their turn, who aimed at his Life, and would be ſatisfied with nothing elſe. *The Jews therefore ſaid unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.* And this was alſo, *That the ſaying of Jeſus might be fulfilled which he ſpake, ſignifying what Death he ſhould dye.* Purſuing therefore their Deſign, of making him appear to *Pontius Pilate* guilty of Treaſon againſt *Cæſar*, Luke XXIII. 2. *They began*

began to accuſe him, ſaying; We found this Fellow perverting the Nation, and forbidding to give Tribute to Cæſar; *ſaying, that he himſelf is the Meſſiah the King:* All which were Inferences of theirs, from his ſaying, he was *the Son of God:* Which *Pontius Pilate* finding (for 'tis conſonant, that he examined them to the preciſe words he had ſaid) their Accuſation had no weight with him. However, the Name of King being ſuggeſted againſt Jeſus, he thought himſelf concerned to ſearch it to the bottom. *John* XVIII. 33—37. *Then* Pilate *entred again into the Judgment-Hall, and called Jeſus, and ſaid unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jeſus anſwered him, Sayeſt thou this of thy ſelf, or did others tell it thee of me?* Pilate *anſwered, am I a Jew? Thine own Nation and the Chief Prieſt have delivered thee unto me: What haſt thou done? Jeſus anſwered, My Kingdom is not of this World: If my Kingdom were of this World, then would my ſervants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the Jews: But my Kingdom is not from hence.* Pilate *therefore ſaid unto him, Art thou a King then? Jeſus anſwered,*

Thou

Thou ſayeſt that I am a King. For this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the World, that I ſhould bear witneſs to the Truth: Every one that is of the Truth heareth my voice. In this Dialogue between our Saviour and *Pilate*, we may Obſerve, 1. That being asked, whether he were *the King of the Jews*? He anſwers ſo, that though he deny it not, yet he avoided giving the leaſt Umbrage, that he had any Deſign upon the Government. For though he allows himſelf to be a King, yet to obviate any ſuſpicion, he tells *Pilate His Kingdom is not of this World*; And evidences it by this, that if he had pretended to any Title to that Country, his followers, which were not a few, and were forward enough to believe him their King, would have fought for him; if he had had a mind to ſet himſelf up by force, or his Kingdom were ſo to be erected. *But my Kingdom*, ſays he, *is not from hence*; Is not of this faſhion, or of this place.

2. *Pilate*, being by his words and circumſtances ſatisfied that he laid no Claim to his Province, or meant any Diſturbance of the Government, was

yet a little ſurprized to hear a Man, in that poor Garb, without Retinue, or ſo much as a Servant or a Friend, own himſelf to be a King; And therefore asks him, with ſome kind of wonder, *Art thou a King then?*

3. That our Saviour declares, that his great buſineſs into the World was, to teſtifie and make good this great Truth, that he was a King; *i. e.* in other words, that he was the *Meſſiah.*

4. That whoever were followers of Truth, and got into the way of Truth and Happineſs, received this Doctrine concerning him, *viz.* That he was the *Meſſiah* their King.

Pilate being thus ſatisfied, that he neither meant, nor could there ariſe any harm from his pretence, whatever it was, to be a King; Tells the Jews, *v.* 38. *I find no fault in this man.* But the Jews were the more fierce, *Luke* XXIII. 5. ſaying, *He ſtirreth up the people* to Sedition, by *his Preaching through all* Jewry, *beginning from* Galilee *to this place.* And then *Pilate*, learning that he was of *Galilee*, *Herod*'s Juriſdiction, ſent him to *Herod*; to whom alſo *the Chief Prieſt and Scribes*, v. 10. *vehemently accuſed*

accuſed him. Herod finding all their Accuſations either falſe or frivolous, thought our Saviour a bare Object of Contempt; And ſo turning him only into Ridicule, ſent him back to *Pilate*: Who calling unto him the Chief Prieſts, and the Rulers, and the People, *v.* 14. *Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the People; And behold, I having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man, touching theſe things whereof ye accuſe him; No, nor yet* Herod; *for I ſent you to him: And ſo nothing worthy of Death is done by him:* And therefore he would have releaſed him. *For he knew the Chief Prieſts had delivered him through envy, Mark* XV. 10. And when they demanded *Barrabbas* to be releaſed, but as for Jeſus, cryed, Crucifie him; *Luke* XXIII. 22. Pilate *ſaid unto them the third time, Why? What evil hath he done? I have found no cauſe of death in him; I will therefore chaſtiſe him, and let him go.*

We may obſerve in all this whole Proſecution of the Jews, that they would fain have got it out of *Jeſus*'s own mouth, in expreſs words, that he

was the *Meſſiah*: Which not being able to do with all their Art and Endeavour; All the reſt that they could alledge againſt him, not amounting to a Proof before *Pilate*, that he claimed to be King of the Jews; or that he had cauſed or done any thing towards a Mutiny or Inſurrection among the People; (for upon theſe two, as we ſee, their whole Charge turned) *Pilate* again and again pronounced him innocent: For ſo he did a fourth, and a fifth time; bringing him out to them, after he had whip'd him, *John* XIX. 4. 6. And after all, *When* Pilate *ſaw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a Tumult was made, he took Water, and waſhed his hands before the multitude, ſaying, I am innocent of the Blood of this juſt man; ſee you to it*, *Mat.* XXVII. 24. Which gives us a clear reaſon of the cautious and wary Conduct of our Saviour; in not declaring himſelf, in the whole courſe of his Miniſtry, ſo much as to his Diſciples, much leſs to the Multitude or the Rulers of the Jews, in expreſs words, to be the *Meſſiah* the King: And why he kept himſelf always in Prophetical or Parabolical terms: (He and his Diſciples

ciples Preaching only the Kingdom of God, *i. e.* of the *Meſſiah*, to be come) And left to his Miracles to declare who he was; Though this was the Truth, which he came into the World, as he ſays himſelf, *John* XVIII. 37. to teſtifie, and which his Diſciples were to believe.

When *Pilate*, ſatisfied of his Innocence, would have releaſed him; And the Jews perſiſted to cry out, *Crucifie him, Crucifie him*, *John* XIX. 6. Pilate *ſays to them, Take ye him your ſelves, and Crucifie him: For I do not find any fault in him.* The Jews then, ſince they could not make him a State-Criminal, by alledging his ſaying that he was *the Son of God*; ſay, by their Law it was a Capital Crime, *v.* 7. *The Jews anſwered to* Pilate, *We have a Law, and by our Law he ought to die; becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God.* After this, *Pilate* was the more deſirous to releaſe him, *v.* 12, 13. *But the Jews cried out, ſaying, If thou let this man go, thou art not* Cæſar's *Friend: Whoſoever maketh himſelf a King, ſpeaketh againſt* Cæſar. Here we ſee the ſtreſs of their Charge againſt Jeſus; whereby

they hoped to take away his Life; *viz.* That he *made himſelf King*. We ſee alſo upon what they grounded this Accuſation, *viz.* Becauſe he had owned himſelf to be *the Son of God*. For he had, in their hearing, never made or profeſſed himſelf to be a King. We ſee here likewiſe the reaſon why they were ſo deſirous to draw, from his own mouth, a Confeſſion in expreſs words that he was the *Meſſiah*; *viz.* That they might have what might be a clear Proof that he did ſo. And laſt of all, we ſee the reaſon why, though in Expreſſions, which they underſtood, he owned himſelf to them to be the *Meſſiah*; yet he avoided declaring it to them, in ſuch words as might look Criminal at *Pilate*'s Tribunal. He owned himſelf to be the *Meſſiah* plainly to the Underſtanding of the *Jews*; But in ways that could not, to the Underſtanding of *Pilate*, make it appear that he laid claim to the Kingdom of *Judea*, or went about to make himſelf King of that Country. But whether his ſaying, that he was *the Son of God*, was Criminal by their Law, that *Pilate* troubled not himſelf about.

He

He that conſiders what *Tacitus*, *Suetonius*, *Seneca*, *de Benef. l.* 3. *c.* 26. ſay of *Tiberius* and his Reign, will find how neceſſary it was for our Saviour, if he would not dye as a Criminal and a Traytor, to take great heed to his words and actions; that he did, or ſaid not any thing, that might be offenſive, or give the leaſt Umbrage to the *Roman* Government. It behoved an Innocent Man, who was taken notice of for ſomething Extraordinary in him, to be very wary; Under a jealous and cruel Prince, who encouraged Informations, and filled his Reign with Executions for Treaſon; Under whom words ſpoken innocently, or in jeſt, if they could be miſconſtrued, were made Treaſon; and proſecuted with a Rigor, that made it always the ſame thing to be accuſed and condemned. And therefore we ſee, that when the *Jews* told *Pilate*, *John* XIX. 12. That he ſhould not be a Friend to *Cæſar*, if he let *Jeſus* go; (For that whoever made himſelf King, was a Rebel againſt *Cæſar*;) He asks them no more, whether they would take *Barrabbas*, and ſpare *Jeſus*; But (though

againſt his Conſcience) gives him up to Death, to ſecure his own Head.

One thing more there is, that gives us light into this wiſe and neceſſarily cautious management of himſelf, which manifeſtly agrees with it, and makes a part of it: And that is, the choice of his Apoſtles; exactly ſuited to the deſign and fore-ſight of the Neceſſity of keeping the declaration of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, which was now expected, within certain general terms during his Miniſtry; And not opening himſelf too plainly or forwardly, to the heady Jews, that he himſelf was the *Meſſiah*; but leaving it to be found out by the Obſervation of thoſe who would attend to the Purity of his Life, and the Teſtimony of his Miracles, and the Conformity of all with the Predictions concerning him; without an expreſs promulgation that he was the *Meſſiah*, till after his Death. His Kingdom was to be opened to them by degrees, as well to prepare them to receive it, as to enable him to be long enough amongſt them; to perform what was the work of the *Meſſiah* to be done; and fulfil all thoſe ſeveral parts of what

was

was foretold of him in the Old Teſtament, and we ſee applyed to him in the New.

The *Jews* had no other thoughts of their *Meſſiah*, but of a Mighty Temporal Prince, that ſhould raiſe their Nation into an higher degree of Power, Dominion, and Proſperity than ever it had enjoyed. They were filled with the expectation of a Glorious Earthly Kingdom. It was not therefore for a Poor Man, the Son of a Carpenter, and (as they thought) born in *Galilee*, to pretend to it. None of the *Jews*, no not his Diſciples, could have born this; if he had expreſly avowed this at firſt, and began his Preaching, and the opening of his Kingdom this way; Eſpecially if he had added to it, that in a Year or two he ſhould dye an ignominious Death upon the Croſs. They are therefore prepared for the Truth by degrees. Firſt, *John the Baptiſt* tells them, *The Kingdom of God* (a name by which the Jews called the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*) *is at hand.* Then our Saviour comes, and he tells them *of the Kingdom of God*; Sometimes that it is at hand, and upon ſome occaſions, that

that it is come; but ſays in his Publick Preaching little or nothing of himſelf. Then come the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts after his Death, and they in expreſs words teach what his Birth, Life, and Doctrine had done before, and had prepared the well-diſpoſed to receive; *viz.* That *Jeſus is the Meſſiah.*

To this Deſign and Method of Publiſhing the Goſpel, was the choice of the Apoſtles exactly adjuſted; A company of Poor, Ignorant, Illiterate Men; who, as Chriſt himſelf tells us, *Mat.* XI. 25. and *Luke* X. 21. Were not of the *Wiſe and Prudent* Men of the World: They were, in that reſpect, but meer Children. Theſe, convinced by the Miracles they ſaw him daily do, and the unblameable Life he lead, might be diſpoſed to believe him to be the *Meſſiah:* And though they with others expected a Temporal Kingdom on Earth, might yet reſt ſatisfied in the truth of their Maſter (who had honoured them with being near his Perſon) that it would come, without being too inquiſitive after the time, manner, or ſeat of his Kingdom; As men of Letters, more ſtudied in their Rabbins, or men of

of Buſineſs, more verſed in the World, would have been forward to have been. Men great, or wiſe, in Knowledge or ways of the World, would hardly have been kept from prying more narrowly into his Deſign and Conduct; Or from queſtioning him about the ways and meaſures he would take, for aſcending the Throne; and what means were to be uſed towards it, and when they ſhould in earneſt ſet about it. Abler men, of higher Births or Thoughts, would hardly have been hindred from whiſpering, at leaſt to their Friends and Relations, that their Maſter was the *Meſſiah*; And that though he concealed himſelf to a fit Opportunity, and till things were ripe for it, yet they ſhould ere long ſee him break out of his Obſcurity, caſt off the Cloud, and declare himſelf, as he was, King of *Iſrael*. But the ignorance and lowneſs of theſe good poor men made them of another temper. They went along in an implicite truſt on him, punctually keeping to his Commands, and not exceeding his Commiſſion. When he ſent them to Preach the Goſpel, He bid them Preach *The Kingdom of God* to be at hand; And that they

they did, without being more particular than he had ordered; or mixing their own Prudence with his Commands, to promote the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*. They preached it, without giving, or ſo much as intimating that their Maſter was he: Which men of another Condition, and an higher Education, would ſcarce have forborn to have done. When he asked them, who they thought him to be; And *Peter* anſwered, *The Meſſiah, the Son of God*, *Mat.* XVI. 16. He plainly ſhews, by the following words, that he himſelf had not told them ſo; And at the ſame time, *v.* 20. forbids them to tell this their Opinion of him, to any body. How obedient they were to him in this, we may not only conclude from the ſilence of the Evangeliſts concerning any ſuch thing, publiſhed by them any where before his Death; but from the exact Obedience three of them paid to a like Command of his. He takes *Peter*, *James*, and *John* into a Mountain; And there *Moſes* and *Elias* coming to him, he is transfigured before them: *Mat.* XVII. 9. He charges them, ſaying; *See that ye tell no man what you have ſeen,*

ſeen, till the Son of Man ſhall be riſen from the dead. And St. *Luke* tells us, what punctual Obſervers they were of his Orders in this caſe: *Chap.* IX. 36. *They kept it cloſe, and told no man, in thoſe days, any of thoſe things which they had ſeen.*

Whether twelve other men, of quicker Parts, and of a Station or Breeding which might have given them any Opinion of themſelves, or their own Abilities; would have been ſo eaſily kept from medling beyond juſt what was preſcribed them, in a matter they had ſo much Intereſt in; and have ſaid nothing of what they might in Humane Prudence have thought would have contributed to their Maſter's Reputation, and made way for his advancement to his Kingdom; I leave to be conſidered. And it may ſuggeſt matter of Meditation, whether St. *Paul* was not for this reaſon, by his Learning, Parts, and warmer Temper, better fitted for an Apoſtle after, than during our Saviour's Miniſtry: And therefore, though a choſen Veſſel, was not by the Divine Wiſdom called till after Chriſt's Reſurrection.

I offer

I offer this only as a Subject of magnifying the Admirable Contrivance of the Divine Wisdom, in the whole Work of our Redemption, as far as we are able to trace it by the foot-steps which God hath made visible to Humane Reason. For though it be as easie to Omnipotent Power to do all things by an immediate over-ruling Will; and so to make any Instruments work, even contrary to their Nature, in subserviency to his ends; Yet his Wisdom is not usually at the expence of Miracles (if I may so say) but only in cases that require them, for the evidencing of some Revelation or Mission to be from him. He does constantly (unless where the confirmation of some Truth requires it otherwise) bring about his Purposes by means operating according to their Natures. If it were not so, the course and evidence of things would be confounded; Miracles would lose their name and force, and there could be no distinction between Natural and Supernatural.

There had been no room left to see and admire the Wisdom, as well as Innocence, of our Saviour; if he had rashly every

every where expoſed himſelf to the Fury of the Jews, and had always been preſerved by a miraculous ſuſpenſion of their Malice, or a miraculous reſcuing him out of their Hands. It was enough for him once to eſcape from the men of *Nazareth*, who were going to throw him down a Precipice, for him never to Preach to them again. Our Saviour had multitudes that followed him for the Loaves; Who barely ſeeing the Miracles that he did, would have made him King. If to the Miracles he did, he had openly added in expreſs words, that he was the *Meſſiah*, and the King they expected to deliver them; he would have had more Followers, and warmer in the Cauſe, and readier to ſet him up at the Head of a Tumult. Theſe indeed, God, by a miraculous Influence, might have hindred from any ſuch Attempt: But then Poſterity could not have believed that the Nation of the *Jews* did at that time expect the *Meſſiah*, their King and Deliverer; Or that *Jeſus*, who declared himſelf to be that King and Deliverer, ſhewed any Miracles amongſt them, to convince them of it; Or did any thing worthy to make

make him be credited or received. If he had gone about Preaching to the multitude which he drew after him, that he was the *Meſſiah*, *the King of Iſrael*; and this had been evidenced to *Pilate*; God could indeed, by a Supernatural Influence upon his mind, have made *Pilate* pronounce him Innocent; And not Condemn Him as a Malefactor, Who had openly, for three Years together, preached Sedition to the People, and endeavoured to perſwade them that he was the *Meſſiah their King*, of the Blood-Royal of *David*, come to deliver them. But then I ask, whether Poſterity would not either have ſuſpected the Story, or that ſome Art had been uſed to gain that Teſtimony from *Pilate*? Becauſe he could not (for nothing) have been ſo favourable to *Jeſus*, as to be willing to releaſe ſo Turbulent and Seditious a Man; to declare him Innocent; and caſt the blame and guilt of his Death, as unjuſt, upon the Envy of the Jews.

But now the Malice of the Chief Prieſts, Scribes, and Phariſees; the Headineſs of the Mob, animated with hopes, and raiſed with miracles; *Judas's* Treachery,

Treachery, and *Pilate*'s care of his Government, and the Peace of his Province, all working Naturally as they ſhould; *Jeſus*, by the admirable warineſs of his Carriage, and an extraordinary Wiſdom viſible in his whole Conduct, weathers all theſe Difficulties, does the Work he comes for, uninterruptedly goes about Preaching his full appointed time, ſufficiently manifeſts himſelf to be the *Meſſiah* in all the Particulars the Scriptures had foretold of him; And when his hour is come, ſuffers Death; But is acknowledged both by *Judas* that betrayed, and *Pilate* that condemned him, to dye innocent. For, to uſe his own words, *Luke* XXIV. 46. *Thus it is written, and thus it behooved the Meſſiah to ſuffer.* And of his whole Conduct, we have a Reaſon and clear Reſolution in thoſe words to St. *Peter*, *Mat.* XXVI. 53. *Thinkeſt thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he ſhall preſently give me more than twelve Legions of Angels? But how then ſhall the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it muſt be?*

Having this clue to guide us, let us now obſerve how our Saviour's Preach-

ing and Conduct comported with it, in the laſt Scene of his Life. How cautious he has been in the former part of his Miniſtry, we have already obſerved. We never find him to uſe the Name of the *Meſſiah* but once, till he now came to *Jeruſalem* this laſt Paſſover. Before this, his Preaching and Miracles were leſs at *Jeruſalem* (where he uſed to make but very ſhort ſtays) than any where elſe. But now he comes ſix days before the Feaſt, and is every day in the Temple Teaching; And there publickly heals the Blind and the Lame, in the preſence of the *Scribes*, *Phariſees*, and *Chief Prieſts*. The time of his Miniſtry drawing to an end, and his hour coming, he cared not how much the Chief Prieſts, Elders, Rulers, and the *Sanhedrim* were provoked againſt him by his Doctrine and Miracles; He was as open and bold in his Preaching and doing the Works of the *Meſſiah* now at *Jeruſalem*, and in the ſight of the Rulers, and of all the People, as he had been before cautious and reſerved there, and careful to be little taken notice of in that place, and not to come in their way more than needs.

All

All now that he took care of, was, not what they ſhould think of him, or deſign againſt him, (for he knew they would ſeize him) But to ſay or do nothing that might be a juſt matter of Accuſation againſt him, or render him Criminal to the Governour. But as for the Grandees of the *Jewiſh* Nation, he ſpares them not, but ſharply now reprehends their miſcarriages publickly in the Temple; where he calls them, more than once, Hypocrites; As is to be ſeen, *Mat.* XXIII. And concludes all with no ſofter a Compellation, than *Serpents* and *Generation of Vipers.*

After this ſevere Reproof of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, being retired with his Diſciples into the *Mount of Olives*, over againſt the Temple; And there fore-telling the Deſtruction of it; His Diſciples ask him, *Mat.* XXIV. 3, *&c. When it ſhould be, and what ſhould be the ſigns of his coming?* He ſays to them, *Take heed that no man deceive you: For many ſhall come in my Name*; *i. e.* taking on them the Name and Dignity of the *Meſſiah*, which is only mine; ſaying, *I am the Meſſiah, and ſhall deceive many.* But be not you by them

miſlead, nor by Perſecution driven away from this Fundamental Truth, That I am the *Meſſiah*; *For many ſhall be ſcandalized*, and Apoſtatize, *but he that endures to the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved: And this Goſpel of the Kingdom ſhall be preached in all the World*: *i e.* The good News of me, the *Meſſiah*, and my Kingdom, ſhall be ſpread through the World. This was the great and only Point of Belief they were warned to ſtick to; And this is inculcated again, *v.* 23—26. and *Mark* XIII. 21—23. with this Emphatical Application to them in both theſe Evangeliſts, *Behold, I have told you beforehand*; remember ye are fore-warned.

This was in his Anſwer to the Apoſtles Enquiry concerning his *Coming, and the end of the World*, *v.* 3. For ſo we tranſlate τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος; We muſt underſtand the Diſciples here to put their Queſtion, according to the Notion and way of ſpeaking of the *Jews*. For they had two *Worlds*, as we tranſlate it, ὁ νῦν αἰὼν καὶ ὁ μέλλων αἰὼν; The *preſent World*, and the *World to come*. The Kingdom of God, as they called it, or the time of the *Meſſiah*,

ſiah, they called ὁ μέλλων αἰὼν, *the World to come*, which they believed was to put an end to *this World*: And that then the Juſt ſhould be raiſed from the Dead; to enjoy, in that *new World*, a Happy Eternity, with thoſe of the Jewiſh Nation who ſhould be then living.

Theſe two things, *viz.* The viſible and powerful appearance of his Kingdom, and the end of the World, being confounded in the Apoſtles Queſtion, Our Saviour does not ſeparate them, nor diſtinctly reply to them apart; But leaving the Enquirers in the common Opinion, anſwers at once concerning his coming to take Vengeance of the *Jewiſh* Nation, and put an end to their Church, Worſhip, and Commonwealth; Which was their ὁ νῦν αἰὼν, which they counted ſhould laſt till the *Meſſiah* came: And ſo it did, and then had an end put to it. And to this he joyns his laſt coming to Judgment, in the Glory of his Father, to put a final end to this World, and all the Diſpenſation belonging to the Poſterity of *Adam* upon Earth. This joyning them together, made his Anſwer obſcure, and

hard to be underſtood by them then; Nor was it ſafe for him to ſpeak plainer of his Kingdom, and the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; unleſs he had a mind to be accuſed for having Deſigns againſt the Government. For *Judas* was amongſt them: And whether no other but his Apoſtles were comprehended under the name of *his Diſciples*, who were with him at this time, one cannot determine. Our Saviour therefore ſpeaks of his Kingdom in no other ſtile but that which he had all along hitherto uſed, *viz. The Kingdom of God*; Luke XXI. 31. *When you ſee theſe things come to paſs, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand.* And continuing on his Diſcourſe with them, he has the ſame Expreſſion, *Mat.* XXV. 1. *Then the Kingdom of Heaven ſhall be like unto ten Virgins.* At the end of the following Parable of the Talents, he adds, *v.* 31. *When the Son of Man ſhall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the Throne of his Glory, and before him ſhall be gathered all the Nations. And he ſhall ſet the Sheep on his right hand, and the Goats on his left. Then ſhall the KING*

ſay,

ſay, &c. Here he deſcribes to his Diſciples the appearance of his Kingdom, wherein he will ſhew himſelf *a King* in Glory upon his Throne; But this in ſuch a way, and ſo remote, and ſo unintelligible to a Heathen Magiſtrate; That if it had been alledged againſt him, it would have ſeemed rather the Dream of a crazy Brain, than the Contrivance of an Ambitious or Dangerous man deſigning againſt the Government: The way of expreſſing what he meant, being in the Prophetick ſtile, which is ſeldom ſo plain, as to be underſtood, till accompliſhed. 'Tis plain, that his Diſciples themſelves comprehended not what Kingdom he here ſpoke of, from their Queſtion to him after his Reſurrection, *Wilt thou at this time reſtore again the Kingdom to Iſrael?*

Having finiſhed theſe Diſcourſes, he takes Order for the Paſſover, and eats it with his Diſciples; And at Supper tells them, that one of them ſhould betray him: And adds, *John* XIII. 19. *I tell it you now, before it come, that when it is come to paſs, you may know that I am.* He does not ſay out the *Meſſiah*; *Judas* ſhould not have that to

ſay againſt him if he would; Though that be the ſenſe in which he uſes this Expreſſion, ἐγώ εἰμι, *I am*, more than once. And that this is the meaning of it, is clear from *Mark* XII. 6. *Luke* XXI. 8. In both which Evangeliſts the words are, *For many ſhall come in my Name, ſaying*, ἐγώ εἰμι, *I am:* The meaning whereof we ſhall find explained in the parallel place of St. *Matthew*, *Chap.* XXIV. 5. For many ſhall come in my Name, ſaying, ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ χριστός, *I am the Meſſiah.* Here in this place of *John* XIII. Jeſus fore-tells what ſhould happen to him, *viz.* That he ſhould be betrayed by *Judas*; adding this Prediction to the many other Particulars of his Death and Suffering, which he had at other times foretold to them. And here he tells them the reaſon of theſe his Predictions, *viz.* That afterwards they might be a confirmation to their Faith. And what was it that he would have them believe, and be confirmed in the belief of? Nothing but this, ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, that *he was the Meſſiah.* The ſame reaſon he gives, *John* XIII. 28. *You have heard, how I ſaid unto you, I go away, and come again unto you: And*

now

now I have told you before it come to paſs, that when it is come to paſs, ye might believe.

When *Judas* had left them, and was gone out, he talks a little freer to them of his Glory, and his Kingdom, than ever he had done before. For now he ſpeaks plainly of himſelf, and his Kingdom, *John* XIII. 31. *Therefore when he* [Judas] *was gone out, Jeſus ſaid, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is alſo glorified in him. And if God be glorified in him, God ſhall alſo glorifie him in himſelf, and ſhall ſtraitway glorifie him.* And *Luke* XXII. 29. *And I will appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink with me at my Table in my Kingdom.* Though he has every where all along through his Miniſtry preached the *Goſpel of the Kingdom*; and nothing elſe but that and Repentance, and the Duties of a good Life; Yet it has been always *the Kingdom of God*, and *the Kingdom of Heaven*: And I do not remember, that any where, till now, he uſes any ſuch expreſſion, as *My Kingdom.* But here now he ſpeaks in the firſt Perſon, *I will appoint you a King-*

Kingdom; And *in my Kingdom*: And this we ſee is only to the Eleven, now *Judas* was gone from them.

With theſe Eleven, whom he was now juſt leaving, he has a long Diſcourſe to comfort them for their loſs of him; And to prepare them for the Perſecution of the World; And to exhort them to keep his Commandments, and to love one another. And here one may expect all the Articles of Faith ſhould be laid down plainly; if any thing elſe were required of them to believe, but what he had taught them, and they believed already; *viz. That he was the Meſſiah*, John XIV. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.* v. 29. *I have told you before it come to paſs, that when it is come to paſs, ye may believe.* It is believing on him, without any thing elſe. *John* XVI. 31. *Jeſus anſwered them, Do you now believe?* This was in Anſwer to their profeſſing, v. 30. *Now are we ſure that thou knoweſt all things, and needeſt not that any man ſhould ask thee: By this we believe that thou comeſt forth from God.*

John XVII. 20. *Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe*

believe on me through their word. All that is ſpoke of *Believing*, in this his laſt Sermon to them, is only *Believing on him*, or believing that *He came from God*; Which was no other than believing him to be the *Meſſiah*.

Indeed, *John* XIV. 9. Our Saviour tells *Philip*, *He that hath ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father.* And adds, *v.* 10. *Believeſt thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I ſpeak unto you, I ſpeak not of my ſelf: But the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works.* Which being in Anſwer to *Philip*'s words, *v.* 9. *Shew us the Father*, ſeem to import thus much: *No man hath ſeen God at any time*, he is known only by his Works. And that he is my Father, and I the Son of God, *i.e.* the *Meſſiah*, you may know by the Works I have done; Which it is impoſſible I could do of my ſelf, but by the Union I have with God my Father. For that by being *in God*, and *God in him*, he ſignifies ſuch an Union with God, that God operates in and by him, appears not only by the words above-cited out of *v.* 10. (which can ſcarce otherwiſe be made coherent ſenſe) but alſo

alſo from the ſame Phraſe uſed again by our Saviour preſently after, *v.* 20. *At that day, viz.* after his Reſurrection, when they ſhould ſee him again, *ye ſhall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you; i. e.* By the works I ſhall enable you to do, through a Power I have received from the Father: Which whoever ſees me do, muſt acknowledge the Father to be in me; And whoever ſees you do, muſt acknowledge me to be in you. And therefore he ſays, *v.* 12. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do ſhall he alſo do, becauſe I go unto my Father.* Though I go away, yet I ſhall be in you, who believe in me; And ye ſhall be enabled to do Miracles alſo for the carrying on of my Kingdom, as I have done; That it may be manifeſted to others that you are ſent by me, as I have evidenced to you that I am ſent by the Father. And hence it is that he ſays, in the immediately preceding *v.* 11. *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; If not, believe me for the ſake of the works themſelves.* Let the Works that I have done convince you that I am

am ſent by the Father; That he is with me, and that I do nothing but by his Will, and by vertue of the Union I have with him; And that conſequently I am the *Meſſiah*, who am anointed, ſanctified, and ſeparate by the Father to the Work for which he hath ſent me.

To confirm them in this Faith, and to enable them to do ſuch Works as he had done, he promiſes them the Holy Ghoſt, *John* XIV. 25, 26. *Theſe things I have ſaid unto you, being yet preſent with you.* But when I am gone, *the Holy Ghoſt, the Paraclet* (which may ſignifie Monitor as well as Comfortor, or Advocate), *which the Father ſhall ſend you in my Name, he ſhall ſhew you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things which I have ſaid.* So that conſidering all that I have ſaid, and laying it together, and comparing it with what you ſhall ſee come to paſs, you may be more abundantly aſſured that I am the *Meſſiah*, and fully comprehend that I have done and ſuffered all things foretold of the *Meſſiah*; and that were to be accompliſhed and fulfilled by him, according to the Scriptures. But be

not

not filled with grief that I leave you; *John* XVI. 7. *It is expedient for you that I go away: For if I go not away, the Paraclet will not come unto you.* One Reason why, if he went not away, the Holy Ghost could not come, we may gather from what has been observed concerning the Prudent and wary carriage of our Saviour all through his Ministry, that he might not incur Death with the least suspicion of a Malefactor: And therefore though his Disciples believed him to be the *Messiah*, yet they neither understood it so well, nor were so well confirmed in the belief of it, as after that he being crucified and risen again, they had received the Holy Ghost; And with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, a fuller and clearer Evidence and Knowledge that he was the *Messiah*; And were enlightned to see how his Kingdom was such as the Scriptures foretold, though not such as they, till then, had expected. And now this Knowledge and Assurance received from the Holy Ghost, was of use to them after his Resurrection; when they could then boldly go about, and openly Preach, as they did, that *Jesus* was

was the *Meſſiah*; confirming that Doctrine by the Miracles which the Holy Ghoſt impowered them to do. But till he was dead and gone, they could not do this. Their going about openly Preaching, as they did after his Reſurrection, that *Jeſus* was the *Meſſiah*; and doing Miracles every where to make it good, would not have conſiſted with that Character of Humility, Peace, and Innocence, which the *Meſſiah* was to ſuſtain; if they had done it before his Crucifixion. For this would have drawn upon him the Condemnation of a Malefactor, either as a ſtirrer of Sedition againſt the Publick Peace; or as a Pretender to the Kingdom of *Iſrael*. And hence we ſee, that they who before his Death preached only the *Goſpel of the Kingdom*; that *the Kingdom of God was at hand*; As ſoon as they had received the Holy Ghoſt after his Reſurrection, changed their ſtile, and every where in expreſs words declare that *Jeſus* is the *Meſſiah*, that *King* which was to come. This, the following words here in St. *John* XVI. 8—14. confirm; Where he goes on to tell them; *And when he is come, he will convince the World of Sin: Becauſe*

Becauſe they believed not on me. Your Preaching then, accompanied with Miracles, by the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt, ſhall be a Conviction to the World that the *Jews* ſinned in not believing me to be the *Meſſiah. Of Righteouſneſs*, or Juſtice: *Becauſe I go to my Father, and ye ſee me no more.* By the ſame Preaching and Miracles you ſhall confirm the Doctrine of my Aſcenſion; and thereby convince the World that I was that *Juſt One*, who am therefore aſcended to the Father into Heaven, where no unjuſt Perſon ſhall enter. *Of Judgment: Becauſe the Prince of this World is judged.* And by the ſame aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt ye ſhall convince the World that the Devil is judged or condemned, by your caſting of him out, and deſtroying his Kingdom, and his Worſhip where ever you Preach. Our Saviour adds, *I have yet many things to ſay unto you, but you cannot bear them now.* They were yet ſo full of a Temporal Kingdom, that they could not bear the diſcovery of what a kind of Kingdom his was, nor what a King he was to be; And therefore he leaves them to the coming of the

the Holy Ghoſt, for a farther and fuller diſcovery of himſelf, and the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*; For fear they ſhould be ſcandalized in him, and give up the hopes they had now in him, and forſake him. This he tells them, *v.* 1. of this XVI. Chapter: *Theſe things I have ſaid unto you, that you may not be ſcandalized.* The laſt thing he had told them before his ſaying this to them, we find in the laſt Verſes of the precedent Chapter: *When the Paraclet is come, the Spirit of Truth, he ſhall witneſs concerning me.* He ſhall ſhew you who I am, and witneſs it to the World; And then *Ye alſo ſhall bear witneſs, becauſe ye have been with me from the beginning.* He ſhall call to your mind what I have ſaid and done, that ye may underſtand it, and know, and bear Witneſs concerning me. And again here, *John* XVI. after he had told them, they could not bear what he had more to ſay, he adds; *v.* 13. *Howbeit, when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth; and he will ſhew you things to come: He ſhall glorifie me.* By the Spirit, when he comes, ye ſhall be fully inſtructed concerning me; And though

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the Holy Ghoſt, for a farther and fuller diſcovery of himſelf, and the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*; For fear they ſhould be ſcandalized in him, and give up the hopes they had now in him, and forſake him. This he tells them, *v.* 1. of this XVI. Chapter: *Theſe things I have ſaid unto you, that you may not be ſcandalized.* The laſt thing he had told them before his ſaying this to them, we find in the laſt Verſes of the precedent Chapter: *When the Paraclet is come, the Spirit of Truth, he ſhall witneſs concerning me.* He ſhall ſhew you who I am, and witneſs it to the World; And then *Ye alſo ſhall bear witneſs, becauſe ye have been with me from the beginning.* He ſhall call to your mind what I have ſaid and done, that ye may underſtand it, and know, and bear Witneſs concerning me. And again here, *John* XVI. after he had told them, they could not bear what he had more to ſay, he adds; *v.* 13. *Howbeit, when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth; and he will ſhew you things to come: He ſhall glorifie me.* By the Spirit, when he comes, ye ſhall be fully inſtructed concerning me; And though

you cannot yet, from what I have ſaid to you, clearly comprehend my Kingdom and Glory; yet he ſhall make it known to you wherein it conſiſts: And though I am now in a mean ſtate, and ready to be given up to Contempt, Torment, and Death; So that ye know not what to think of it; Yet the Spirit, when he comes, *ſhall glorifie me*, and fully ſatisfie you of my Power and Kingdom; And that I ſit on the right hand of God, to order all things for the good and increaſe of it, till I come again at the laſt day in fulneſs of Glory.

Accordingly, the Apoſtles had a full and clear ſight and perſwaſion of this, after they had received the Holy Ghoſt; And they preached it every where boldly and openly, without the leaſt remainder of doubt or uncertainty. But that they underſtood him not, yet even ſo far as his Death and Reſurrection, is evident from *v.* 17, 18. *Then ſaid ſome of the Diſciples among themſelves, What is this that he ſaith unto us; A little while, and ye ſhall not ſee me; And again, a little while, and ye ſhall ſee me; and becauſe I go to the Father? They ſaid therefore, what is this that he ſaith, a little while?*

We

We know not what he ſaith. Upon which he goes on to Diſcourſe to them of his Death and Reſurrection, and of the Power they ſhould have of doing Miracles; But all this he declares to them in a Myſtical and involved way of ſpeaking; as he tells them himſelf, *v.* 25. *Theſe things have I ſpoken to you in Proverbs; i. e.* In General, Obſcure, Ænigmatical, or Figurative terms. (All which, as well as Alluſive Apologues, the Jews called Proverbs or Parables) Hitherto my declaring of my ſelf to you hath been obſcure, and with reſerve; And I have not ſpoken of my ſelf to you in plain and direct words, becauſe ye *could not bear it*. A *Meſſiah*, and not a King, you could not underſtand; And a King living in Poverty and Perſecution, and dying the Death of a Slave and Malefactor upon a Croſs, you could not put together. And had I told you in plain words that I was the *Meſſiah*, and given you a direct Commiſſion to Preach to others that I profeſſedly owned my ſelf to be the *Meſſiah*, you and they would have been ready to have made a Commotion, to have ſet me upon the Throne of my

Father *David*, and to fight for me, that your *Meſſiah*, your King, in whom are your hopes of a Kingdom, ſhould not be delivered up into the hands of his Enemies, to be put to Death; And of this, *Peter* will inſtantly give you an Example. But *the time cometh when I ſhall no more ſpeak unto you in Parables; but I ſhall ſhew unto you plainly of the Father.* My Death and Reſurrection, and the coming of the Holy Ghoſt, will ſpeedily enlighten you, and then I ſhall make you know the Will and Deſign of the Father; What a Kingdom I am to have, and by what means, and to what end, *v.* 27. And this the Father himſelf will ſhew unto you; *For he loveth you, becauſe ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from the Father*; Becauſe ye have believed that I am the *Son of God, the Meſſiah*; That he hath anointed and ſent me; Though it hath not been yet fully diſcovered to you, what kind of Kingdom it ſhall be, nor by what means brought about. And then our Saviour, without being asked, explaining to them what he had ſaid; And making them underſtand better, what before they ſtuck at, and complained

plained ſecretly among themſelves that they underſtood not; They thereupon declare, *v.* 30. *Now are we ſure that thou knoweſt all things, and needeſt not that any man ſhould ask thee.* 'Tis plain thou knoweſt mens Thoughts and Doubts before they ask. *By this we believe that thou comeſt forth from God. Jeſus anſwered, Do ye now believe?* Notwithſtanding that you now believe that I came from God, and am the *Meſſiah*, ſent by him; *Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye ſhall be ſcattered*; And as it is, *Mat.* XXVI. 31. and *ſhall all be ſcandalized in me.* What it is to be ſcandalized in him, we may ſee by what followed hereupon, if that which he ſays to St. *Peter*, *Mark* XIV. did not ſufficiently explain it.

This I have been the more particular in; That it may be ſeen, that in this laſt Diſcourſe to his Diſciples (where he opened himſelf more than he had hitherto done; and where, if any thing more was required to make them Believers, than what they already believed, we might have expected they ſhould have heard of it;) there were no new Articles propoſed to them, but what

they believed before, *viz.* That he was the *Meſſiah*, the Son of God, ſent from the Father; Though of his manner of proceeding, and his ſudden leaving the World, and ſome few particulars, he made them underſtand ſomething more than they did before. But as to the main deſign of the Goſpel, *viz.* That he had a Kingdom, that he ſhould be put to Death, and riſe again, and aſcend into Heaven to his Father, and come again in Glory to Judge the World; This he had told them: And ſo had acquainted them with the Great Council of God, in ſending him the *Meſſiah*, and omitted nothing that was neceſſary to be known or believed in it. And ſo he tells them himſelf, *John* XV. 15. *Henceforth I call ye not Servants; for the Servant knoweth not what his Lord does: But I have called ye Friends; for ALL THINGS I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you;* though perhaps ye do not ſo fully comprehend them, as you will ſhortly, when I am riſen and aſcended.

To conclude all, in his Prayer, which ſhuts up this Diſcourſe, he tells the Father

Father what he had made known to his Apoſtles; The Reſult whereof we have *John* XVII. 8. *I have given unto them the words which thou gaveſt me, and they have received them, and* THEY *HAVE BELIEVED THAT THOU DIDST SEND ME:* Which is in effect, that he was the *Meſſiah* promiſed and ſent by God. And then he Prays for them, and adds, *v.* 20, 21. *Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo who ſhall believe on me through their word.* What that Word was, through which others ſhould believe in him, we have ſeen in the Preaching of the Apoſtles all through the Hiſtory of the *Acts*, *viz.* This one great Point, that Jeſus was the *Meſſiah*. The Apoſtles, he ſays, *v.* 25. *know that thou haſt ſent me*; *i. e.* are aſſured that I am the *Meſſiah*. And in *v.* 21. & 23. he Prays, *That the World may believe* (which *v.* 23. is called knowing) *that thou haſt ſent me.* So that what Chriſt would have believed by his Diſciples, we may ſee by this his laſt Prayer for them, when he was leaving the World, as well as by what he Preached whilſt he was in it.

And as a Teſtimony of this, one of his laſt Actions, even when he was upon the Croſs, was to confirm this Doctrine; by giving Salvation to one of the Thieves that was crucified with him, upon his Declaration that he believed him to be the *Meſſiah:* For ſo much the words of his Requeſt imported, when he ſaid, *Remember me, Lord, when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom*, *Luke* XXIII. 42. To which Jeſus replied, *v.* 43. *Verily I ſay unto thee, to day ſhalt thou be with me in Paridiſe.* An Expreſſion very remarkable: For as *Adam*, by ſin, left *Paradiſe*; *i. e.* a ſtate of Happy Immortality; Here the believing Thief, through his Faith in *Jeſus* the *Meſſiah*, is promiſed to be put in Paradiſe, and ſo re-inſtated in an Happy Immortality.

Thus our Saviour ended his Life. And what he did after his Reſurrection, St. *Luke* tells us, *Acts* I. 3. That he ſhewed himſelf to the Apoſtles *forty days, ſpeaking* things *concerning the Kingdom of God.* This was what our Saviour preached in the whole Courſe of his Miniſtry, before his Paſſion: And no other Myſteries of Faith does he now diſcover

diſcover to them after his Reſurrection. All he ſays, is concerning the Kingdom of God; And what it was he ſaid concerning that, we ſhall ſee preſently out of the other Evangeliſts; having firſt only taken notice, that when now they asked him, *v.* 6. *Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore again the Kingdom to* Iſrael? *He ſaid, unto them,* v. 7. *It is not for you to know the Times, and the Seaſons, which the Father hath put in his own power: But ye ſhall receive Power after that the Holy Ghoſt is come upon you; And ye ſhall be witneſſes unto me unto the utmoſt parts of the Earth.* Their great buſineſs was to be Witneſſes to *Jeſus*, of his Life, Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion; which put together, were undeniable Proofs of his being the *Meſſiah:* Which was what they were to Preach, and what he ſaid to them concerning the Kingdom of God; As will appear by what is recorded of it in the other Evangeliſts.

The day of his Reſurrection, appearing to the two going to *Emmaus*, *Luke* XXIV. They declare, *v.* 21. what his Diſciples Faith in him was: *But we truſted that it had been He which ſhould have*

have redeemed Iſrael; *i. e.* We believed that he was the *Meſſiah*, come to deliver the Nation of the *Jews*. Upon this *Jeſus* tells them, they ought to believe him to the *Meſſiah*, notwithſtanding what had happened; Nay, they ought by his Suffering and Death to be confirmed in that Faith, that he was the *Meſſiah*. And *v.* 26, 27. *Beginning at* Moſes *and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himſelf*; How *that the Meſſiah ought to have ſuffered theſe things, and to have entred into his Glory.* Now he applies the Propheſies of the *Meſſiah* to himſelf, which we read not that he did ever do before his Paſſion. And afterwards appearing to the Eleven, *Luke* XXIV. 36. He ſaid unto them, *v.* 44—47. *Theſe words which I ſpoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things muſt be fulfilled which are written in the Law of* Moſes, *and in the Prophets, and in the Pſalms concerning me. Then opened he their Underſtandings, that they might underſtand the Scripture, and ſaid unto them; Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Meſſiah to ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead,*

dead the third day; And that Repentance, and Remiſſion of Sins ſhould be preached in his Name among all Nations, beginning at Jeruſalem. Here we ſee what it was he had preached to them, though not in ſo plain open words, before his Crucifixion; And what it is he now makes them underſtand; And what it was that was to be preached to all Nations, *viz.* That he was the *Meſſiah*, that had ſuffered, and roſe from the Dead the third day, and fulfilled all things that was written in the Old Teſtament concerning the *Meſſiah*; And that thoſe who believed this, and repented, ſhould receive Remiſſion of their Sins through this Faith in him. Or, as St. *Mark* has it, *Chap.* XVI. 15. *Go into all the World, and Preach the Goſpel to every Creature; He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; But he that believeth not, ſhall be damned*, v. 20. What the *Goſpel, or Good News* was, we have ſhewed already, *viz.* The happy Tidings of the *Meſſiah* being come. *v.* 20. And *they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with ſigns following.* What the

the *Word* was which they preached, and the Lord confirmed with Miracles, we have ſeen already out of the Hiſtory of their Acts; Having given an Account of their Preaching every where, as it is recorded in the *Acts*, except ſome few places, where the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* is mentioned under the name of *the Kingdom of God*; Which I forbore to ſet down, till I had made it plain out of the Evangeliſts, that That was no other but the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*.

It may be ſeaſonable therefore now, to add to thoſe Sermons we have formerly ſeen of St. *Paul* (wherein he preached no other Article of Faith, but that *Jeſus was the Meſſiah*, the King, who being riſen from the Dead, now Reigneth, and ſhall more publickly manifeſt his Kingdom, in judging the World at the laſt day) what farther is left upon Record of his Preaching. *Acts* XIX. 8. At *Epheſus*, Paul *went into the Synagogues, and ſpake boldly for the ſpace of three months; diſputing and perſwading concerning the Kingdom of God.* And *Acts* XX. 25. At *Miletus* he thus takes leave of the Elders of *Epheſus*: *And*

now

now behold, I know that ye all among whom I have gone Preaching the Kingdom of God, ſhall ſee my face no more. What this Preaching the Kingdom of God was, he tells you, *v.* 20, 21. *I have kept nothing back from you, which was profitable unto you, but have ſhewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from Houſe to Houſe; Teſtifying both to the Jews, and to the Greeks, Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And ſo again, *Acts* XXVIII. 23, 24. *When they* [the Jews at *Rome*] *had appointed him* [Paul] *a day, there came many to him into his Lodging; To whom he expounded and teſtified the Kingdom of God; perſwading them concerning Jeſus, both out of the Law of* Moſes, *and out of the Prophets, from Morning to Evening. And ſome believed the things which were ſpoken, and ſome believed not.* And the Hiſtory of the *Acts* is concluded with this Account of St. *Paul's* Preaching: *And* Paul *dwelt two whole years in his own hired Houſe, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching thoſe things which concern the Lord Jeſus the Meſſiah.* We may there-

therefore here apply the ſame Concluſion, to the Hiſtory of our Saviour, writ by the Evangeliſts; And to the Hiſtory of the Apoſtles, writ in the *Acts*; which St. *John* does to his own Goſpel, *Chap.* XX. 30, 31. *Many other ſigns did Jeſus before his Diſciples*; And in many other places the Apoſtles preached the ſame Doctrine, *which are not written* in theſe Books; *But theſe are written, that you may believe that Jeſus is the Meſſiah, the Son of God; and that believing, you may have life in his Name.*

What St. *John* thought neceſſary and ſufficient to be *believed*, for the attaining Eternal Life, he here tells us. And this, not in the firſt dawning of the Goſpel; when, perhaps, ſome will be apt to think leſs was required to be believed, than after the Doctrine of Faith, and Myſtery of Salvation, was more fully explained, in the Epiſtles writ by the Apoſtles. For it is to be remembred, that St. *John* ſays this not as ſoon as Chriſt was aſcended; For theſe words, with the reſt of St. *John*'s Goſpel, were not written till many Years after not only the other Goſpels, and St. *Luke*'s Hiſtory of the *Acts*; but in all appear-

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ance, after all the Epiſtles writ by the other Apoſtles. So that above Threeſcore Years after our Saviour's Paſſion; (for ſo long after, both *Epiphanius* and St. *Jerome* aſſure us this Goſpel was written) St. *John* knew nothing elſe required to be believed for the attaining of Life, but that *Jeſus is the Meſſiah, the Son of God*.

To this, 'tis likely, it will be objected by ſome, that to believe only that *Jeſus* of *Nazareth* is the *Meſſiah*, is but an *Hiſtorical*, and not a Juſtifying or Saving Faith.

To which I Anſwer; That I allow to the makers of Syſtems and their followers, to invent and uſe what diſtinctions they pleaſe; and to call things by what names they think fit. But I cannot allow to them, or to any man, an Authority to make a Religion for me, or to alter that which God hath revealed. And if they pleaſe to call the believing that which our Saviour and his Apoſtles preached and propoſed alone to be believed, an *Hiſtorical* Faith; they have their liberty. But they muſt have a care how they deny it to be a Juſtifying or Saving Faith, when our Savi-

Saviour and his Apoſtles have declared it ſo to be, and taught no other which men ſhould receive, and whereby they ſhould be made Believers unto Eternal Life; Unleſs they can ſo far make bold with our Saviour, for the ſake of their beloved Syſtems, as to ſay, that he forgot what he came into the World for; And that he and his Apoſtles did not Inſtruct People right in the way and Myſteries of Salvation. For that this is the ſole Doctrine preſſed and required to be believed in the whole tenour of our Saviour's and his Apoſtles Preaching, we have ſhewed through the whole Hiſtory of the Evangeliſts and the *Acts*. And I challenge them to ſhew that there was any other Doctrine, upon their aſſent to which, or disbelief of it, men were pronounced *Believers*, or Unbelievers; And accordingly received into the Church of Chriſt, as Members of his Body, as far as meer believing could make them ſo, or elſe kept out of it. This was the only Goſpel-Article of Faith which was preached to them. And if nothing elſe was preached every where, the Apoſtles Argument will hold againſt any other

other Articles of Faith to be be believed under the Goſpel; *Rom.* X. 14. *How ſhall they believe that whereof they have not heard?* For to Preach any other Doctrines neceſſary to be believed, we do not find that any body was ſent.

Perhaps it will farther be urged, That this is not a *Saving Faith*; Becauſe ſuch a *Faith* as this the Devils may have, and 'twas plain they had; For they believed and declared *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*. And St. *James*, *Chap.* II. 19. tells us, *The Devils believe, and tremble*; And yet they ſhall not be ſaved. To which I anſwer, 1. That they could not be ſaved by any *Faith*, to whom it was not propoſed as a means of Salvation, nor ever promiſed to be counted for Righteouſneſs. This was an Act of Grace, ſhewn only to Mankind. God dealt ſo favourably with the Poſterity of *Adam*, that if they would believe *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, the promiſed King and Saviour; And perform what other Conditions were required of them by the Covenant of Grace; God would Juſtifie them, becauſe of this Belief. He would account this Faith to them for Righteouſneſs,

and look on it as making up the defects of their Obedience; Which being thus ſupplied by what was taken inſtead of it, they were looked on as Juſt or Righteous, and ſo inherited Eternal Life. But this Favour ſhewn to Mankind, was never offered to the fallen Angels. They had no ſuch Propoſals made to them: And therefore whatever of this kind was propoſed to men, it availed them not, whatever they performed of it. This Covenant of Grace was never offered to them.

2. I Anſwer; That though the Devils believed, yet they could not be ſaved by the Covenant of Grace; Becauſe they performed not the other Condition required in it, altogether as neceſſary to be performed as this of Believing, and that is *Repentance.* Repentance is as abſolute a Condition of the Covenant of Grace, as Faith; and as neceſſary to be performed as that. *John the Baptiſt*, who was to prepare the way for the *Meſſiah*, *Preached the Baptiſm of Repentance for the remiſſion of ſins*, Mark 1. 4.

As *John* began his Preaching with *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is*

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at hand, *Mat.* III. 2. So did our Saviour begin his, *Mat.* IV. 17. *From that time began Jeſus to Preach, and to ſay, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* Or, as St. *Mark* has it in that parallel place, *Mark* I. 14, 15. *Now after that* John *was put in Priſon, Jeſus came into* Galilee, *Preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom of God, and ſaying; The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye, and believe the Goſpel.* This was not only the beginning of his Preaching, but the ſum of all that he did Preach; *viz.* That men ſhould *Repent*, and believe the good Tidings which he brought them; That *the time was fulfilled* for the coming of the *Meſſiah*. And this was what his Apoſtles preached, when he ſent them out, *Mark* VI. 12. *And they going out, preached that men ſhould Repent.* Believing Jeſus to be the *Meſſiah*, and Repenting, were ſo Neceſſary and Fundamental parts of the Covenant of Grace, that one of them alone is often put for both. For here St. *Mark* mentions nothing but their Preaching *Repentance*; as St. *Luke*, in the parallel place, *Chap.* IX. 6. mentions nothing but their

Evangelizing, or Preaching the Good News of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*: And St. *Paul* often in his Epiſtles puts *Faith* for the whole Duty of a Chriſtian. But yet the tenour of the Goſpel is what Chriſt declares, *Luke* XII. 3. 5. *Unleſs ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* And in the Parable of the Rich Man in Hell, delivered by our Saviour, *Luke* XVI. *Repentance* alone is the means propoſed of avoiding that place of Torment, *v.* 30, 31. And what the tenor of the Doctrine, which ſhould be preached to the World, ſhould be, He tells his Apoſtles after his Reſurrection, *Luke* XXIV. 27. *viz. That Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins ſhould be preached in his Name*, who was the *Meſſiah*. And accordingly, believing *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, and Repenting, was what the Apoſtles preached. So *Peter* began, *Acts* II. 38. *Repent, and be baptized.* Theſe two things were required for the Remiſſion of Sins, *viz.* Entring themſelves in the Kingdom of God; And owning and profeſſing themſelves the Subjects of *Jeſus*, whom they believed to be the *Meſſiah*, and received for their Lord and King; For that was to *be baptized*

tized in his Name: Baptiſm being an initiating Ceremony known to the *Jews*, whereby thoſe, who leaving Heatheniſm, and profeſſing a ſubmiſſion to the Law of *Moſes*, were received into the Common-wealth of *Iſrael*. And ſo it was made uſe of by our Saviour, to be that Solemn viſible Act, whereby thoſe who believed him to be the *Meſſiah*, received him as their King, and profeſſed Obedience to him, were admitted as Subjects into his Kingdom: Which in the Goſpels is called the *Kingdom of God;* And in the *Acts* and Epiſtles often by another name, *viz.* The *Church.*

The ſame St. *Peter* Preaches again to the *Jews*, Acts III. 19. *Repent, and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out.*

What this Repentance was; which the New Covenant required as one of the Conditions to be performed by all thoſe who ſhould receive the Benefits of that Covenant; is plain in the Scripture, to be not only a ſorrow for ſins paſt, but (what is a Natural conſequence of ſuch ſorrow, if it be real) a turning from them, into a new and contrary Life. And ſo they are joyned together,

Acts III. 19. *Repent and turn about*; Or, as we render it, be converted. And *Acts* XXVI. *Repent and turn to God.*

And ſometimes *turning about* is put alone, to ſignifie Repentance, *Mat.* XIII. 15. *Luke* XXII. 32. Which in other words is well expreſſed by *Newneſs of Life.* For it being certain that he who is really ſorry for his ſins, and abhors them, will turn from them, and forſake them; Either of theſe Acts, which have ſo Natural a connexion one with the other, may be, and is often put for both together. Repentance is an hearty ſorrow for our paſt miſdeeds, and a ſincere Reſolution and Endeavour, to the utmoſt of our power, to conform all our Actions to the Law of God. So that Repentance does not conſiſt in one ſingle Act of ſorrow (though that being the firſt and leading Act, gives denomination to the whole) But in *doing works meet for Repentance*, in a ſincere Obedience to the Law of Chriſt, the remainder of our Lives. This was called for by *John the Baptiſt*, the Preacher of Repentance, *Mat.* III. 8. *Bring forth fruits meet for Repentance.* And by St. *Paul* here, *Acts* XXVI. 20. *Repent*

pent and turn to God, and do works meet for Repentance. There are works to follow belonging to Repentance, as well as ſorrow for what is paſt.

Theſe two, Faith and Repentance; *i. e.* believing Jeſus to be the *Meſſiah*, and a good Life; are the indiſpenſible Conditions of the New Covenant. The Reaſonableneſs, or rather Neceſſity of which, (as the only Conditions required in the Covenant of Grace, to be performed by all thoſe who would obtain Eternal Life) that we may the better comprehend, we muſt a little look back to what was ſaid in the beginning.

Adam being the Son of God; and ſo St. *Luke* calls him, *Chap.* III. 38. had this part alſo of the *Likeneſs* and *Image* of his Father, *viz.* That he was Immortal. But *Adam* tranſgreſſing the Command given him by his Heavenly Father, incurred the Penalty, forfeited that ſtate of Immortality, and became Mortal. After this, *Adam* begot Children: But they were *in his own likeneſs, after his own image*; Mortal, like their Father.

God nevertheleſs, out of his Infinite Mercy, willing to beſtow Eternal Life on Mortal Men, ſends Jeſus Chriſt into the World; Who being conceived in the Womb of a Virgin (that had not known Man) by the immediate Power of God, was properly the Son of God; According to what the Angel declared to his Mother, *Luke* I. 30—35. *The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the Power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee: Therefore alſo that Holy Thing which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called THE SON OF GOD.* So that being the Son of God, he was, like his Father, *Immortal.* As he tells us, *John* V. 26. *As the Father hath life in himſelf, ſo hath he given to the Son to have life in himſelf.*

And that Immortality is a part of that *Image*, wherein theſe (who were the immediate Sons of God, ſo as to have no other Father) were made like their Father, appears probable, not only from the places in *Geneſis* concerning *Adam*, above taken notice of, but ſeems to me alſo to be intimated in ſome Expreſſions concerning *Jeſus*, the Son of God. In the New Teſtament, *Col.* I. 15.

15. He is called *the Image of the inviſible God*. *Inviſible* ſeems put in, to obviate any groſs Imagination, that he (as Images uſe to do) repreſented God in any corporeal or viſible Reſemblance. And there is farther ſubjoyned, to lead us into the meaning of it, *The Firſt-born of every Creature*; Which is farther explained, *v.* 18. Where he is termed *The Firſt-born from the dead*: Thereby making out, and ſhewing himſelf to be the *Image* of the Inviſible God; That Death hath no power over him: But being the Son of God, and not having forfeited that Son-ſhip by any Trangreſſion, was the Heir of Eternal Life; As *Adam* ſhould have been, had he continued in his filial Duty. In the ſame ſenſe the Apoſtle ſeems to uſe the word *Image* in other places, *viz. Rom.* VIII. 29. *Whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son, that he might be the firſt-born among many Brethren.* This *Image*, to which they were conformed, ſeems to be *Immortality* and Eternal Life. For 'tis remarkable that in both theſe places St. *Paul* ſpeaks of the Reſurrection; And that Chriſt was *The Firſt-*

Firſt-born among many Brethren; He being by Birth the Son of God, and the others only by Adoption, as we ſee in this ſame Chapter, *v.* 15—17. *Ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: The Spirit it ſelf bearing witneſs with our Spirits that we are the Children of God. And if Children, then Heirs; And Joynt-Heirs with Chriſt: If ſo be that we ſuffer with him, that we may alſo be glorified together.* And hence we ſee that our Saviour vouchſafes to call thoſe, who at the Day of Judgment are through him entring into Eternal Life, his *Brethren*; *Mat.* XXV. 40. *In as much as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren.* And may we not in this find a reaſon why God ſo frequently in the New Teſtament, and ſo ſeldom, if at all, in the Old, is mentioned under the ſingle Title of THE FATHER? And therefore our Saviour ſays, *Mat.* XI. *No man knoweth the Father ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him.* God has now a Son again in the World, the Firſt-born of many Brethren, who all now, by the Spirit of Adoption, can ſay, *Abba*, Father.

Father. And we by Adoption, being for his ſake made his Brethren, and the Sons of God, come to ſhare in that Inheritance, which was his Natural Right; he being by Birth the Son of God: Which Inheritance is Eternal Life. And again, *v.* 23. *We groan within our ſelves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body*; Whereby is plainly meant the change of theſe frail Mortal Bodies, into the Spiritual Immortal Bodies at the Reſurrection; *When this Mortal ſhall have put on Immortality*, 1 *Cor.* XV. 54. Which in that Chapter, *v.* 42—44. he farther expreſſes thus: *So alſo is the Reſurrection of the dead. It is ſown in Corruption, it is raiſed in Incorruption: It is ſown in diſhonour, it is raiſed in Glory: It is ſown in Weakneſs, it is raiſed in Power: It is ſown a Natural Body, it is raiſed a Spiritual Body*, &c. To which he ſubjoyns, *v.* 49. *As we have born the Image of the Earthy*, (*i. e.* As we have been Mortal, like Earthy *Adam* our Father, from whom we are deſcended, when he was turned out of Paradiſe) *We ſhall alſo bear the Image of the Heavenly*; Into whoſe Sonſhip and Inheritance being

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ing adopted, we ſhall, at the Reſurrection, receive that *Adoption* we expect, *Even the Redemption of our Bodies*; And after his *Image*, which is the *Image* of the Father, become Immortal. Hear what he ſays himſelf, *Luke* XX. 35, 36. *They who ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that World, and the Reſurrection from the Dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the Angels, and are the SONS OF GOD, being the Sons of the Reſurrection.* And he that ſhall read St. *Paul*'s Arguing, *Acts* XIII. 32, 33. will find that the great Evidence that Jeſus was the *Son of God*, was his Reſurrection. Then the Image of his Father appeared in him, when he viſibly entred into the ſtate of Immortality. For thus the Apoſtle reaſons; *We Preach to you, how that the Promiſe which was made to our Fathers, God hath fulfilled the ſame unto us, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again; As it is alſo written in the ſecond Pſalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

This may ſerve a little to explain the *Immortality* of the Sons of God, who are

are in this like their Father, made after his *Image* and Likeneſs. But that our Saviour was ſo, he himſelf farther declares, *John* X. 18. Where ſpeaking of his Life, he ſays, *No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my ſelf: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.* Which he could not have had, if he had been a Mortal Man, the Son of a Man, of the Seed of *Adam*; Or elſe had by any Tranſgreſſion forfeited his Life. For *the wages of Sin is Death:* And he that hath incurred Death for his own Tranſgreſſion, cannot lay down his Life for another, as our Saviour profeſſes he did. For he was the Juſt One, *Acts* VII. 57. and XII. 14. *Who knew no ſin.* 2 *Cor.* V. 21. *Who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth.* And thus, *As by Man came Death, ſo by Man came the Reſurrection of the Dead. For as in* Adam *all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.*

For this laying down his Life for others, our Saviour tells us, *John* X. 17. *Therefore does my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I might take it again.* And this his Obedience and

and Suffering was rewarded with a Kingdom; which, he tells us, *Luke* XXII. *His Father had appointed unto him*; And which, 'tis evident out of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, *Chap.* XII. 2. he had a regard to in his Sufferings: *Who for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the Throne of God.* Which Kingdom given him upon this account of his Obedience, Suffering, and Death, He himſelf takes notice of, in theſe words, *John* XVII. 1—4. *Jeſus lift up his eyes to Heaven, and ſaid, Father, the hour is come, glorifie thy Son, that thy Son alſo may glorifie thee. As thou haſt given him power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give Eternal Life to as many as thou haſt given him. And this is Life Eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jeſus the Meſſiah, whom thou haſt ſent. I have glorified thee on Earth: I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do.* And St. *Paul*, in his Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, *Chap.* II. 8—11. *He humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto Death, even the death of the Croſs. Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted*

exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name: That at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; And that every Tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord.

Thus God, we ſee, deſigned his Son *Chriſt Jeſus* a Kingdom, an Everlaſting Kingdom in Heaven. But *Though as in* Adam *all die, ſo in Chriſt all ſhall be made alive*; And all men ſhall return to Life again at the laſt day; Yet all men having ſinned, and thereby *come ſhort of the Glory of God*, as St. *Paul* aſſures us, *Rom.* III. 23. (*i. e.* Not attaining to the Heavenly Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, which is often called the Glory of God; as may be ſeen, *Rom.* V. 2. & XV. 7. & II. 7. *Mat.* XVI. 27. *Mark* VIII. 38. For no one who is unrighteous, *i e.* comes ſhort of perfect Righteouſneſs, ſhall be admitted into the Eternal Life of that Kingdom; As is declared, 1 *Cor.* VI. 9. *The unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*;) And Death, the Wages of Sin, being the Portion of all thoſe who had tranſgreſſed the Righteous Law of God; The

Son

Son of God would in vain have come into the World, to lay the Foundations of a Kingdom, and gather together a ſelect People out of the World, if, (they being found guilty at their appearance before the Judgment-ſeat of the Righteous Judge of all men at the laſt day) inſtead of entrance into Eternal Life in the Kingdom he had prepared for them, they ſhould receive Death, the juſt Reward of Sin, which every one of them was guilty of. This ſecond Death would have left him no Subjects; And inſtead of thoſe Ten Thouſand times Ten Thouſand, and Thouſands of Thouſands, there would not have been one left him to ſing Praiſes unto his Name, ſaying, *Bleſſing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be unto him that ſitteth on the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* God therefore, out of his Mercy to Mankind, and for the erecting of the Kingdom of his Son, and furniſhing it with Subjects out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation, propoſed to the Children of Men, that as many of them as would believe *Jeſus* his Son (whom he ſent into the World) to be the *Meſſiah*, the promiſed Deliverer;

Deliverer; And would receive him for their King and Ruler; ſhould have all their paſt Sins, Diſobedience, and Rebellion forgiven them: And if for the future they lived in a ſincere Obedience to his Law, to the utmoſt of their power; the ſins of Humane Frailty for the time to come, as well as all thoſe of their paſt Lives, ſhould, for his Son's ſake, becauſe they gave themſelves up to him to be his Subjects, be forgiven them: And ſo their Faith, which made them be baptized into his Name; (*i. e.* Enroll themſelves in the Kingdom of *Jeſus* the *Meſſiah*, and profeſs themſelves his Subjects, and conſequently live by the Laws of his Kingdom) ſhould be accounted to them for Righteouſneſs; *i. e.* Should ſupply the defects of a ſcanty Obedience in the ſight of God; Who counting this Faith to them for Righteouſneſs, or Compleat Obedience, did thus Juſtifie, or make them Juſt, and thereby capable of Eternal Life.

Now, that this is the Faith for which God of his free Grace Juſtifies ſinful Man; (For *'tis God alone that juſtifieth*, *Rom.* VIII. 33. *Rom.* III. 26.) We have

already ſhewed; by obſerving through all the Hiſtory of our Saviour and the Apoſtles, recorded in the Evangeliſts, and in the *Acts*, what he and his Apoſtles preached and propoſed to be believed. We ſhall ſhew now, that beſides believing him to be the *Meſſiah* their King, it was farther required, that thoſe who would have the Priviledge, Advantages, and Deliverance of his Kingdom, ſhould enter themſelves into it; And by Baptiſm being made Denizons, and ſolemnly incorporated into that Kingdom, live as became Subjects obedient to the Laws of it. For if they believed him to be the *Meſſiah* their King, but would not obey his Laws, and would not have him to Reign over them, they were but greater Rebels; and God would not Juſtifie them for a Faith that did but increaſe their Guilt, and oppoſe Diametrically the Kingdom and Deſign of the *Meſſiah*; *Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and puriſie unto himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good works*, *Titus* II. 14. And therefore St. *Paul* tells the *Galatians*, That that which availeth is *Faith*; But *Faith working*

working by Love. And that *Faith* without *Works*, *i.e.* the Works of ſincere Obedience to the Law and Will of Chriſt, is not ſufficient for our Juſtification, St. *James* ſhews at large. *Chap.* II.

Neither indeed could it be otherwiſe; For Life, Eternal Life being the Reward of Juſtice or Righteouſneſs only, appointed by the Righteous God (who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity) to thoſe only who had no taint or infection of Sin upon them, it is impoſſible that he ſhould Juſtifie thoſe who had no regard to Juſtice at all, whatever they believed. This would have been to encourage Iniquity, contrary to the Purity of his Nature; and to have condemned that Eternal Law of Right, which is Holy, Juſt, and Good; Of which no one Precept or Rule is abrogated or repealed; nor indeed can be; whilſt God is an Holy, Juſt, and Righteous God, and Man a Rational Creature. The Duties of that Law ariſing from the Conſtitution of his very Nature, are of Eternal Obligation; Nor can it be taken away or diſpenſed with, without changing the Nature of Things, overturning the meaſures of

Right and Wrong, and thereby introducing and authorizing Irregularity, Confuſion, and Diſorder in the World. Which was not the end for which Chriſt came into the World; But on the contrary, to reform the corrupt ſtate of degenerate Man; And out of thoſe who would mend their Lives, and bring forth Fruit meet for Repentance, erect a new Kingdom.

This is the Law of that Kingdom, as well as of all Mankind; And that Law by which all Men ſhall be judged at the laſt day. Only thoſe who have believed *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, and have taken him to be their King, with a ſincere Endeavour after Righteouſneſs, in obeying his Law, ſhall have their paſt ſins not imputed to them; And ſhall have that Faith taken inſtead of Obedience; Where Frailty and Weakneſs made them tranſgreſs, and ſin prevailed after Converſion in thoſe who hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs (or perfect Obedience) and do not allow themſelves in Acts of Diſobedience and Rebellion, againſt the Laws of that Kingdom they are entred into.

He

He did not expect, 'tis true, a Perfect Obedience void of all ſlips and falls: He knew our Make, and the weakneſs of our Conſtitutions too well, and was ſent with a Supply for that Defect. Beſides, perfect Obedience was the Righteouſneſs of the Law of Works; and then the Reward would be of Debt, and not of Grace; And to ſuch there was no need of Faith to be imputed to them for Righteouſneſs. They ſtood upon their own legs, were Juſt already, and needed no allowance to be made them for believing Jeſus to be the *Meſſiah*, taking him for their King, and becoming his Subjects. But whether Chriſt does not require Obedience, ſincere Obedience, is evident from the Laws he himſelf pronounces (unleſs he can be ſuppoſed to give and inculcate Laws only to have them diſobeyed) and from the Sentence he will paſs when he comes to Judge.

The Faith required was, to believe *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, the Anointed; who had been promiſed by God to the World. Amongſt the *Jews* (to whom the Promiſes and Propheſies of the *Meſſiah* were more immediately delivered)

Anointing was uſed to three ſorts of Perſons, at their Inauguration; Whereby they were ſet apart to three great Offices; *viz.* Of Prieſts, Prophets, and Kings. Though theſe three Offices be in Holy Writ attributed to our Saviour, yet I do not remember that he any where aſſumes to himſelf the Title of a Prieſt, or mentions any thing relating to his Prieſthood: Nor does he ſpeak of his being a Prophet but very ſparingly, and once or twice, as it were, by the by: But the Goſpel, or the Good News of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, is what he Preaches every where, and makes it his great buſineſs to publiſh to the World. This he did, not only as moſt agreeable to the Expectation of the *Jews*, who looked for their *Meſſiah*, chiefly as coming in Power to be their King and Deliverer; But as it beſt anſwered the chief end of his Coming, which was to be a King, and as ſuch to be received by thoſe who would be his Subjects in the Kingdom which he came to erect. And though he took not directly on himſelf the Title of King till he was in Cuſtody, and in the hands of *Pilate*; yet 'tis plain,

King,

King, and *King of Iſrael*, were the Familiar and received Titles of the *Meſſiah*. See *John* I. 50. *Luke* XIX. 38. Compared with *Mat.* XXI. 9. And *Mark* XI. 9. *John* XII. 13. *Mat.* XXI. 5. *Luke* XXIII. 2. Compared with *Mat.* XXVII. 11. And *John* XVIII. 33—37. *Mark* XV. 12. Compared with *Mat.* XXVII. 22. *Mat.* XXVII. 42.

What thoſe were to do, who believed him to be the *Meſſiah*, and received him for their King, that they might be admitted to be partakers with him of this Kingdom in Glory, we ſhall beſt know by the Laws he gives them, and requires them to obey; And by the Sentence which he himſelf will give, when, ſitting on his Throne, they ſhall all appear at his Tribunal, to receive every one his Doom from the mouth of this Righteous Judge of all Men.

What he propoſed to his Followers to be believed, we have already ſeen; by examining his, and his Apoſtles Preaching, ſtep by ſtep, all through the Hiſtory of the four Evangeliſts, and the *Acts of the Apoſtles*. The ſame Method will beſt and plaineſt ſhew us, whether he required of thoſe who be-

lieved him to be the *Meſſiah*, any thing beſides that Faith, and what it was. For he being a King, we ſhall ſee by his Commands what he expects from his Subjects: For if he did not expect Obedience to them, his Commands would be but meer Mockery; And if there were no Puniſhment for the Tranſgreſſors of them, his Laws would not be the Laws of a King, that had Authority to Command, and Power to Chaſtiſe the diſobedient; But empty Talk, without Force, and without Influence.

We ſhall therefore from his Injunctions (if any ſuch there be) ſee what he has made Neceſſary to be performed, by all thoſe who ſhall be received into Eternal Life in his Kingdom prepared in the Heavens. And in this we cannot be deceived. What we have from his own Mouth, eſpecially if repeated over and over again, in different places and expreſſions, will be paſt Doubt and Controverſie. I ſhall paſs by all that is ſaid by St. *John Baptiſt*, or any other, before our Saviour's entry upon his Miniſtry and Publick Promulgation of the Laws of his Kingdom.

He

He began his Preaching with a Command to Repent; As St. *Matt.* tells us, IV. 17. *From that time Jeſus began to preach; ſaying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* And *Luke* V. 32. he tells the Scribes and Phariſees, *I came not to call the righteous*; Thoſe who were truly ſo, needed no help, they had a right to the Tree of Life, *but ſinners to Repentance.*

In this Sermon, as he calls it, in the Mount, *Luke* VI. and *Matt.* V, &c. He commands they ſhould be exemplary in Good Works. *Let your light ſo ſhine amongſt men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven, Matt.* V. 15. And that they might know what he came for, and what he expected of them, he tells them, *v.* 17—20. *Think not that I am come to diſſolve* or looſen *the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to diſſolve,* or looſen, but to *make it full,* or compleat; By giving it you in its true and ſtrict ſenſe. Here we ſee he confirms, and at once reinforces all the Moral Precepts in the Old Teſtament. *For verily I ſay to you, Till Heaven and Earth paſs, one jot or one tittle, ſhall in no wiſe*

paſs

paſs from the Law, till all be done. Whoſoever therefore ſhall break one of theſe leaſt Commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt, (*i. e.* as it is interpreted) Shall not be at all, *in the Kingdom of Heaven. V.* 21. *I ſay unto you, That except your Righteouſneſs, i. e.* your Performance of the Eternal Law of right, *ſhall exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*: And then he goes on to make good what he ſaid, *v.* 17. *viz. That he was come to compleat the Law, viz.* By giving its full and clear ſenſe, free from the corrupt and looſning gloſſes of the Scribes and Phariſees, *v.* 22—26. He tells them, That not only Murder, but cauſeleſs Anger, and ſo much as words of Contempt, were forbidden. He Commands them to be reconciled and kind towards their Adverſaries; And that upon Pain of Condemnation. In the following part of his Sermon, which is to be read *Luke* VI. and more at large, *Matt.* V, VI, VII. He not only forbids actual Uncleanneſs, but all irregular deſires, upon pain of Hell-fire; Cauſleſs Divorces; Swearing

in

in Converſation, as well as Forſwearing in Judgment; Revenge; Retaliation; Oſtentation of Charity, of Devotion, and of Faſting; Repetitions in Prayer; Covetouſneſs; Worldly Care; Cenſorioufneſs: And on the other ſide, Commands Loving our Enemies; Doing good to thoſe that Hate us; Bleſſing thoſe that Curſe us; Praying for thoſe that deſpightfully uſe us; Patience, and Meekneſs under Injuries; Forgiveneſs; Liberality, Compaſſion: And cloſes all his particular injunctions, with this general Golden Rule, *Matt.* VII. 12. *All things whatſoever ye would have that Men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them: For this is the Law and the Prophets.* And to ſhew how much he is in earneſt, and expects Obedience to theſe Laws; He tells them *Luke* VI. 35. That if they obey, *Great ſhall be their REWARD*; they *ſhall be called, The Sons of the Higheſt.* And to all this, in the Concluſion, he adds this Solemn Sanction; *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I ſay?* 'Tis in vain for you to take me for the *Meſſiah* your King, unleſs you obey me. *Not every one who calls me Lord, Lord,*

ſhall

ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, or be Sons of God; *But he that does the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.* To ſuch Diſobedient Subjects, though they have Propheſied and done Miracles in my Name, I ſhall ſay at the day of Judgment; *Depart from me ye workers of Iniquity, I know you not.*

When *Matt.* XII. he was told, That his Mother and Brethren ſought to ſpeak with him, *v.* 49. *Stretching out his hands to his Diſciples, he ſaid, Behold my Mother and my Brethren; For whoſoever ſhall do the Will of my Father, who is in Heaven, he is my Brother, and Siſter, and Mother.* They could not be Children of the Adoption, and fellow Heirs with him of Eternal Life, who did not do the Will of his Heavenly Father.

Matt. XV. and *Mark.* VI. The Phariſees finding fault, that his Diſciples eat with unclean hands, he makes this Declaration to his Apoſtles: *Do ye not perceive, that whatſoever from without entreth into a man, cannot defile him; becauſe it enters not into his Heart, but his Belly. That which cometh out of the Man, that defileth the Man: For from within, out of the Heart of Men, proceed*

ceed evil Thoughts, Adulteries, Fornicati-Murders, Thefts, falſe Witneſſes, Covetouſneſs, Wickedneſs, Deceit, Laciviouſneſs, an evil Eye, Blaſphemy, Pride, Fooliſhneſs. All theſe ill things come from within, and defile a Man.

He commands Self-denial, and the expoſing our ſelves to Suffering and Danger, rather than to deny or diſown him: And this upon pain of looſing our Souls; which are of more worth than all the World. This we may read, *Matt.* XVI. 24—27. and the parallel places, *Matt.* VIII. and *Luke* IX.

The Apoſtles diſputing amongſt them, who ſhould be greateſt in the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, *Matt.* XVIII. 1. He thus determines the Controverſy: *Mark.* IX. 35. *If any one will be firſt, let him be laſt of all, and Servant of all*; And ſetting a Child before them adds, *Matt.* XVIII. 3. *Verily I ſay unto you, Unleſs ye turn, and become as Children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Mat. XVIII. 15. *If thy Brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: If he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy Brother*

ther. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three Witneſſes every word may be eſtabliſhed. And if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church: But if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen and Publican. V. 21. Peter *ſaid, Lord, how often ſhall my Brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive him? Till ſeven times? Jeſus ſaid unto him, I ſay not unto thee, till ſeven times; but until ſeventy times ſeven.* And then ends the Parable of the Servant, who being himſelf forgiven, was rigorous to his Fellow-Servant, with theſe words; *v.* 34. *And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the Tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that was due unto him. So likewiſe ſhall my Heavenly Father do alſo unto you, if you from your hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Treſpaſſes.*

Luke X 25. To the Lawyer, asking him, *What ſhall I do to inherit Eternal Life? He ſaid, What is written in the Law? How readeſt thou?* He anſwered, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy mind;*

mind; *And thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.* Jeſus ſaid, *This do, and thou ſhalt live.* And when the Lawyer, upon our Saviour's Parable of the good *Samaritan*, was forced to confeſs, that he that ſhewed Mercy, was his Neighbour; Jeſus diſmiſſed him with this Charge, *v.* 37. *Go, and do thou likewiſe.*

Luke XI. 41. *Give Alms of ſuch things as ye have: Behold, all things are clean unto you.*

Luke XII. 15. *Take heed, and beware of Covetouſneſs.* V. 22. *Be not ſollicitous what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink, nor what ye ſhall put on*; Be not fearful, or apprehenſive of want, *For it is your Father's pleaſure to give you a Kingdom. Sell that you have, and give Alms: And provide your ſelves bags that wax not old, and Treaſure in the Heavens that faileth not: For where your Treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo. Let your loyns be girded, and your lights burning*; *And ye your ſelves like unto men that wait for the Lord, when he will return. Bleſſed are thoſe Servants, whom the Lord when he cometh, ſhall find watching. Bleſſed is that Servant, whom the Lord having made*

Ruler

Ruler of his Houſhold, to give them their Portion of Meat in due ſeaſon, the Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing. Of a truth I ſay unto you, that he will make him a Ruler over all that he hath. But if that Servant ſay in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming; And ſhall begin to beat the Men-ſervants, and Maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken: The Lord of that Servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in ſunder, and will appoint him his Portion with Unbelievers. And that Servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes. For he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few ſtripes. For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required: And to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Luke XIV. 11. *Whoſoever exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed: And he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted.*

V. 12. *When thou makeſt a Dinner or Supper, call not thy Friends, or thy Brethren,*

thren, neither thy Kinſmen, nor thy Neighbours; leſt they alſo bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makeſt a Feaſt, call the Poor and Maimed, the Lame, and the Blind; And thou ſhalt be bleſſed: For they cannot recompence thee: For thou ſhalt be recompenced at the Reſurrection of the Juſt.

V. 33. *So likewiſe, whoſoever he be of you, that is not ready to forego all that he hath, he cannot be my Diſciple.*

Luke XVI. 9. *I ſay unto you, make to your ſelves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs; That when ye fail, they may receive you into Everlaſting Habitations. If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your truſt the true Riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another mans, who ſhall give you that which is your own?*

Luke XVII. 3. *If thy Brother treſpaſs againſt thee, rebuke him; And if he repent, forgive him. And if he treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times in a day, and ſeven times in a day turn again to thee, ſaying, I repent; Thou ſhalt forgive him.*

Luke XVIII. 1. *He ſpoke a Parable to them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.*

V. 18. *One comes to him, and asks him, ſaying, Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit Eternal Life? Jeſus ſaid to him, If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments. He ſays, Which? Jeſus ſaid, Thou knoweſt the Commandments: Thou ſhalt not Kill; Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery; Thou ſhalt not Steal; Thou ſhalt not bear falſe Witneſs; Defraud not; Honour thy Father, and thy Mother; And thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf. He ſaid, All theſe have I obſerved from my Youth. Jeſus hearing this, loved him; and ſaid unto him, Yet lackeſt thou one thing: Sell all that thou haſt, and give it to the Poor, and thou ſhalt have Treaſure in Heaven; And come, follow me.* To underſtand this right, we muſt take notice, that this Young Man asks our Saviour, what he muſt do, to be admitted effectually into the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*? The Jews believed, that when the *Meſſiah* came, thoſe of their Nation that received him, ſhould not die; But that they, with thoſe who being dead ſhould then be raiſed

raiſed again by him, ſhould enjoy Eternal Life with him. Our Saviour, in Anſwer to this Demand, tells the Young Man, that to obtain the Eternal Life of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, he muſt keep the Commandments. And then enumerating ſeveral of the Precepts of the Law, the Young Man ſays, he had obſerved theſe from his Childhood. For which, the Text tells us, Jeſus loved him. But our Saviour, to try whether in earneſt he believed him to be the *Meſſiah*, and reſolved to take him to be his King, and to obey him as ſuch, bids him give all he has to the Poor, and come, and follow him; and he ſhould have Treaſure in Heaven. This I look on to be the meaning of the place. This, of ſelling all he had, and giving it to the Poor, not being a ſtanding Law of his Kingdom; but a Probationary Command to this Young Man; to try whether he truly believed him to be the *Meſſiah*, and was ready to obey his Commands, and relinquiſh all to follow him, when he his Prince required it.

And therefore we ſee, *Luke* XIX. 14. Where our Saviour takes notice of the

Jews not receiving him as the *Meſſiah*, he expreſſes it thus; *We will not have this man to Reign over us.* 'Tis not enough to believe him to be the *Meſſiah*, unleſs we alſo obey his Laws, and take him to be our King, to Reign over us.

Mat. XXII. 11—13. He that had not on the Wedding-Garment, though he accepted of the Invitation, and came to the Wedding, was caſt into utter Darkneſs. By the *Wedding-Garment*, 'tis evident Good Works are meant here. That Wedding-Garment of fine Linnen, clean and white, which we are told, *Rev.* XIX. 8. is the δικαιώματα, *Righteous acts of the Saints*: Or, as St. *Paul* calls it, *Epheſ.* IV. 1. *The walking worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called.* This appears from the Parable it ſelf: *The Kingdom of Heaven*, ſays our Saviour, *v.* 2. *Is like unto a King, who made a Marriage for his Son.* And here he diſtinguiſhes thoſe who were invited, into three ſorts. 1. Thoſe who were invited, and came not; *i. e.* Thoſe who had the Goſpel, the Good News of the Kingdom of God propoſed to them, but believed not.

2. Thoſe

2. Thoſe who came, but had not on a Wedding-Garment; *i. e.* Believed *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, but were not new clad (as I may ſo ſay) with a true Repentance, and Amendment of Life; Nor adorned with thoſe Vertues, which the Apoſtle, *Col.* III. requires to be put on. 3. Thoſe who were invited, did come, and had on the Wedding-Garment; *i. e.* Heard the Goſpel, believed *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, and ſincerely obeyed his Laws. Theſe three ſorts are plainly deſigned here; whereof the laſt only were the Bleſſed, who were to enjoy the Kingdom prepared for them.

Mat. XXIII. *Be not ye called Rabbi: For one is your Maſter, even the Meſſiah, and ye all are Brethren. And call no man your Father upon the Earth: For one is your Father which is in Heaven. Neither be ye called Maſters: For one is your Maſter, even the Meſſiah. But he that is greateſt amongſt you, ſhall be your Servant. And whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; And he that ſhall humble himſelf, ſhall be exalted.*

Luke XXI. 34. *Take heed to your ſelves, leſt your hearts be at any time*

over-charged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life.

Luke XXII. 25. *He ſaid unto them, The Kings of the Gentiles exerciſe Lordſhip over them; And they that exerciſe Authority upon them, are called Benefactors. But ye ſhall not be ſo. But he that is greateſt amongſt you, let him be as the younger; And he that is chief, as he that doth ſerve.*

John XIII. 34. *A new Commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; As I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another. By this ſhall all men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.* This Command, of loving one another, is repeated again, *Chap.* XV. 12. & 17.

John XIV. 15. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* V. 21. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: And he that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifeſt my ſelf to him.* V. 23. *If a man loveth me, he will keep my words.* V. 24. *He that loveth me not, keepeth not my ſayings.*

John

John XV. 8. *In this is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; ſo ſhall ye be my Diſciples.* V. 14. *Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you.*

Thus we ſee our Saviour not only confirmed the Moral Law; and clearing it from the corrupt gloſſes of the Scribes and Phariſees, ſhewed the ſtrictneſs as well as obligation of its Injunctions; But moreover, upon occaſion, requires the Obedience of his Diſciples to ſeveral of the Commands he afreſh lays upon them; With the enforcement of unſpeakable Rewards and Puniſhments in another World, according to their Obedience, or Diſobedience. There is not, I think, any of the Duties of Morality, which he has not ſome where or other, by himſelf and his Apoſtles, inculcated over and over again to his Followers in expreſs terms. And is it for nothing, that he is ſo inſtant with them to bring forth Fruit? Does He their King Command, and is it an indifferent thing? Or will their Happineſs or Miſery not at all depend upon it, whether they obey or no? They were required to believe

him to be the *Meſſiah*; Which Faith is of Grace promiſed to be reckoned to them for the compleating of their Righteouſneſs, wherein it was defective: But Righteouſneſs, or Obedience to the Law of God, was their great buſineſs; Which if they could have attained by their own Performances, there would have been no need of this Gracious Allowance, in Reward of their Faith: But Eternal Life, after the Reſurrection, had been their due by a former Covenant, even that of Works; the Rule whereof was never aboliſhed, though the Rigour were abated. The Duties enjoyned in it were Duties ſtill. Their Obligations had never ceaſed; nor a wilful neglect of them was ever diſpenſed with. But their paſt Tranſgreſſions were pardoned, to thoſe who received *Jeſus*, the promiſed *Meſſiah*, for their King; And their future ſlips covered, if renouncing their former Iniquities, they entred into his Kingdom, and continued his Subjects, with a ſteady Reſolution and Endeavour to obey his Laws. This Righteouſneſs therefore, a compleat Obedience and freedom from Sin, are ſtill ſincerely to

be endeavoured after. And 'tis no where promiſed, That thoſe who perſiſt in a wilful Diſobedience to his Laws, ſhall be received into the eternal bliſs of his Kingdom, how much ſoever they believe in him.

A ſincere Obedience, how can any one doubt to be, or ſcruple to call, a Condition of the New Covenant, as well as faith; Whoever read our Saviour's Sermon in the Mount, to omit all the reſt? Can any thing be more expreſs than theſe words of our Lord? *Mat.* VI. 14. *If you forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, your Heavenly Father will alſo forgive you: But if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes.* And *Joh.* XIII. 17. *If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.* This is ſo indiſpenſible a Condition of the New Covenant, that believing without it will not do, nor be accepted; If our Saviour knew the Terms on which he would admit Men into Life. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord*, ſays he, *Luke* VI. 46. *and do not the things which I ſay?* It is not enough to believe him to be the *Meſſiah*, the *Lord*, without obeying him. For that theſe he ſpeaks to here, were

were Believers, is evident, from the parallel place, *Matt.* VII. 21—23. where it is thus Recorded: *Not every one who ſays Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father, which is in Heaven.* No Rebels, or Refractory Diſobedient, ſhall be admitted there; though they have ſo far believed in Jeſus, as to be able to do Miracles in his Name; As is plain out of the following words. *Many will ſay to me in that day, Have we not Propheſied in thy Name, and in thy Name have caſt out Devils; and in thy Name have done many wonderful Works? And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye workers of iniquity.*

This part of the New Covenant, the Apoſtles alſo, in their Preaching the Goſpel of the *Meſſiah*, ordinarily joined with the Doctrine of Faith.

St. *Peter* in his firſt Sermon, *Acts* II. when they were pricked in heart, and asked, *What ſhall we do?* ſays, *v.* 38. *REPENT, and be Baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the Remiſſion of Sins.* The ſame he ſays to them again in his next Speech,

Acts

Acts IV. 26. *Unto you firſt, God having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you.* How was this done? *IN TURNING AWAY EVERY ONE FROM YOUR INIQUITIES.*

The ſame Doctrine they Preach to the High Prieſt and Rulers, *Acts* V. 30. *The God of our Fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and hanged on a Tree. Him hath God Exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give REPENTANCE to Iſrael, and Forgiveneſs of Sins; And we are witneſſes of theſe things, and ſo is alſo the Holy Ghoſt, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

Acts XVII. 30. *Paul* tells the *Athenians*, That now under the Goſpel, *God commandeth all Men every where to REPENT.*

Acts XX. 21. St. *Paul* in his laſt Conference with the Elders of *Epheſus*, profeſſes to have taught them the whole Doctrine neceſſary to Salvation. *I have*, ſays he, *kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; But have ſhewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from houſe to houſe; Teſtifying both to the Jews and to the Greeks*: And then gives an account

account what his Preaching had been, *viz. REPENTANCE towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus the Meſſiah.* This was the Sum and Subſtance of the Goſpel which St. *Paul* Preached; and was all that he knew neceſſary to Salvation; *viz. Repentance, and believing Jeſus to be the Meſſiah:* And ſo takes his laſt farewel of them, whom he ſhould never ſee again, *v.* 32. in theſe words. *And now Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are ſanctified.* There is an Inheritance conveyed by the Word and Covenant of Grace; but it is only to thoſe who are *Sanctified.*

Acts XXIV. 24. *When Felix ſent for Paul,* that he and his Wife *Druſilla* might hear him, *concerning the Faith in Chriſt*; Paul reaſoned of *Righteouſneſs*, or Juſtice, and *Temperance*; the Duties we owe to others, and to our ſelves; and of the Judgment to come; Till he made *Felix* to tremble. Whereby it appears, that *Temperance and Juſtice* were Fundamental parts of the Religion that *Paul* profeſſed, and were contained

contained in the Faith which he Preached. And if we find the Duties of the Moral Law not preſſed by him every where; We muſt remember, That moſt of his Sermons left upon Record, were Preached in their Synagogues to the Jews, who acknowledged their Obedience due to all the Precepts of the Law: And would have taken it amiſs to have been ſuſpected, not to have been more Zealous for the Law than he. And therefore it was with reaſon that his Diſcourſes were directed chiefly to what they yet wanted, and were averſe to; the knowledge and imbracing of Jeſus their promiſed *Meſſiah*. But what his Preaching generally was, if we will believe him himſelf, we may ſee *Acts* XXVI. Where giving an Account to King *Agrippa* of his Life and Doctrine, he tells him, *v.* 20. *I ſhewed unto them of Damaſcus, and at Jeruſalem, and throughout all the Coaſts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they ſhould repent and turn to God, and do works meet for Repentance.*

Thus we ſee, by the Preaching of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, that he required of thoſe who believed him to be

be the *Meſſiah*, and received him for their Lord and Deliverer, that they ſhould live by his Laws: And that (though in conſideration of their becoming his Subjects, by Faith in him, whereby they believed and took him to be the *Meſſiah*, their former Sins ſhould be forgiven) Yet he would own none to be his, nor receive them as true denizons of the New *Jeruſalem*, into the inheritance of Eternal Life; but leave them to the Condemnation of the Unrighteous; who renounced not their former Miſcarriages, and lived in a ſincere Obedience to his Commands. What he expects from his Followers, he has ſufficiently declared as a Legiſlator. And that they may not be deceived, by miſtaking the Doctrine of Faith, Grace, Free-Grace, and the Pardon and Forgiveneſs of Sins and Salvation by him, (which was the great End of his Coming) He more than once declares to them; For what omiſſions and miſcarriages he ſhall Judge and Condemn to Death, even thoſe who have owned him, and done Miracles in his Name; when he comes at laſt to render to every one according to what he hath

DONE

DONE in the Fleſh; Sitting upon his Great and Glorious Tribunal, at the end of the World.

The firſt place where we find our Saviour to have mentioned the day of Judgment, is *Joh.* V. 28, 29. in theſe words; *The hour is coming, in which all that are in their Graves ſhall hear his* [i.e. the Son of God's] *Voice, and ſhall come forth; They that have DONE GOOD unto the Reſurrection of Life; And they that have DONE EVIL, unto the Reſurrection of Damnation.* That which puts the diſtinction, if we will believe our Saviour, is the having *done good or evil.* And he gives a reaſon of the neceſſity of his Judging or Condemning thoſe *who have done Evil*, in the following words; *v.* 30. *I can of my own ſelf do nothing. As I hear I judge; And my Judgment is juſt: Becauſe I ſeek not my own Will, but the Will of my Father who hath ſent me.* He could not judge of himſelf; He had but a delegated Power of Judging from the Father, whoſe Will he obeyed in it, and who was of purer Eyes than to admit any unjuſt Perſon into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matt.

Matt. VII. 22, 23. Speaking again of that day, he tells what his Sentence will be, *depart from me ye WORKERS of Iniquity.* Faith in the Penitent and Sincerely Obedient, ſupplies the defect of their Performances; and ſo by Grace they are made Juſt. But we may obſerve; None are Sentenced or Puniſhed for Unbelief; but only for their Miſdeeds. *They are Workers of Iniquity* on whom the Sentence is Pronounced.

Matt. XIII. 14. *At the end of the World, the Son of Man ſhall ſend forth his Angels; And they ſhall gather out of his Kingdom all Scandals, and them which DO INIQUITY; And caſt them into a Furnace of Fire; There ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of Teeth.* And again, *v.* 49. *The Angels ſhall ſever the WICKED from among the JUST; and ſhall caſt them into the Furnace of Fire.*

Matt. XVI. 24. *For the Son of Man ſhall come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels: And then he ſhall Reward every Man according to his WORKS.*

Luke XIII. 26. *Then ſhall ye begin to ſay; We have eaten and drunk in thy Preſence, and thou haſt taught in our Streets. But he ſhall ſay, I tell you, I know*

know you not; Depart from me ye WORKERS of Iniquity.

Matt. XXV. 24—26. *When the Son of Man ſhall come in his Glory; and before him ſhall be gathered all Nations; He ſhall ſet the Sheep on his right hand, and the Goats on his Left: Then ſhall the King ſay to them on his Right hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World; For, I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; Naked, and ye cloathed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in Priſon, and ye came unto me. Then ſhall the Righteous Anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, When ſaw we thee an hungred, and fed thee?* &c. *And the King ſhall anſwer, and ſay unto them; Verily, I ſay unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then ſhall he ſay unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye Curſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me no drink;*

I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in; Naked, and ye cloathed me not; Sick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. In ſo much that ye did it not to one of theſe, ye did it not to me. And theſe ſhall go into Everlaſting Puniſhment: But the Righteous into Life Eternal.

Theſe, I think, are all the places where our Saviour mentions the laſt Judgment; or deſcribes his way of Proceeding in that Great Day: Wherein, as we have obſerved, it is remarkable, that every where the Sentence follows, doing or not doing; without any mention of believing, or not believing. Not that any to whom the Goſpel hath been Preached, ſhall be Saved, without believing *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*: For all being Sinners, and Tranſgreſſors of the Law, and ſo unjuſt; are all liable to Condemnation; unleſs they believe, and ſo through Grace are juſtified by God for this Faith, which ſhall be accounted to them for Righteouſneſs. But the reſt wanting this Cover, this allowance for their Tranſgreſſions, muſt anſwer for all their Actions: And being found Tranſgreſſors of the Law, ſhall by the Letter, and Sanction of that Law, be

be Condemned, for not having paid a full Obedience to that Law: And not for want of Faith. That is not the Guilt, on which the Puniſhment is laid; though it be the want of Faith, which lays open their Guilt uncovered; And expoſes them to the Sentence of the Law, againſt all that are Unrighteous.

The common Objection here, is; If all Sinners ſhall be Condemned, but ſuch as have a gracious allowance made them; And ſo are juſtified by God, for believing *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, and ſo taking him for their King, whom they are reſolved to obey, to the utmoſt of their Power; What ſhall become of all Mankind, who lived before our Saviour's time; Who never heard of his Name; And conſequently could not believe in him? To this, the Anſwer is ſo obvious and natural, that one would wonder, how any reaſonable Man ſhould think it worth the urging. No body was, or can be, required to believe what was never propoſed to him, to believe. Before the Fulneſs of time, which God from the Council of his own Wiſdom had appointed to ſend his Son in; He had at ſeveral times, and in

rent Manners, promiſed to the People of *Iſrael*, an extraordinary Perſon to come; Who, raiſed from amongſt themſelves, ſhould be their Ruler and Deliverer. The time; And other Circumſtances of his Birth, Life, and Perſon; he had in ſundry Propheſies ſo particularly deſcribed, and ſo plainly foretold, that He was well known, and expected by the Jews; under the Name of the *Meſſiah*, or Anointed, given him in ſome of theſe Propheſies. All then that was required before his appearing in the World, was to believe what God had revealed; And to rely with a full aſſurance on God for the performance of his Promiſe; And to believe, that in due time he would ſend them the *Meſſiah*; this anointed King; this promiſed Saviour, and Deliverer; according to his Word. This Faith in the promiſes of God; This relying and acquieſcing in his Word and Faithfulneſs; The Almighty takes well at our hands, as a great mark of homage, paid by us poor frail Creatures, to his *Goodneſs* and *Truth*, as well as to his *Power* and *Wiſdom*; And accepts it as an acknowledgment of his peculiar Providence, and Benignity

Benignity to us. And therefore our Saviour tells us, *John* XII. 44. *He that believes on me, believes not on me; But on him that ſent me.* The works of Nature ſhew his Wiſdom and Power: But 'tis his peculiar Care of Mankind, moſt eminently diſcovered in his Promiſes to them, that ſhews his Bounty and Goodneſs; And conſequently engages their Hearts in Love and Affection to him. This oblation of an Heart, fixed with dependance and affection on him, is the moſt acceptable Tribute we can pay him; the foundation of true Devotion; and Life of all Religion. What a value he puts on this depending on his Word, and reſting ſatisfied in his Promiſes, We have an Example in *Abraham*; whoſe Faith *Was counted to him for Righteouſneſs*; As we have before remarked out of *Rom.* IV. And his relying firmly on the Promiſe of God, without any doubt of its performance; gave him the Name, of the Father of the Faithful; And gained him ſo much favour with the Almighty, that he was called the *Friend of God*: The Higheſt and moſt Glorious Title can be beſtowed

on a Creature. The thing promiſed was no more, but a Son by his Wife *Sarah*; and a numerous Poſterity by him, which ſhould poſſeſs the Land of *Canaan*. Theſe were but Temporal Bleſſings; And (except the Birth of a Son) very remote; Such as he ſhould never live to ſee, nor in his own Perſon have the benefit of. But becauſe he queſtioned not the Performance of it; But reſted fully ſatisfied in the Goodneſs, Truth, and Faithfulneſs of God who had promiſed; It was counted to him for Righteouſneſs. Let us ſee how St. *Paul* expreſſes it; *Rom.* IV. 18—22. *Who, againſt hope, believed in hope, that he might become the Father of many Nations; According to that which was ſpoken, ſo ſhall thy Seed be. And being not weak in his Faith, he conſidered not his own Body now dead, when he was above an hundred years old; Neither yet the deadneſs of* Sarah's *Womb. He ſtaggered not at the Promiſe of God through unbelief, but was ſtrong in Faith, giving Glory to God; And being fully perſwaded, that what he had promiſed, he was able to perform. And THEREFORE, it was imputed to him for Righteouſneſs.*

Righteouſneſs. St. *Paul* having here Emphatically deſcribed the ſtrength and firmneſs of *Abraham's* Faith, informs us; That he thereby *gave glory to God*; And therefore it was *accounted to him for Righteouſneſs.* This is the way that God deals with poor frail Mortals. He is graciouſly pleaſed to take it well of them; And give it the place of Righteouſneſs, and a kind of merit in his ſight; If they believe his Promiſes, and have a ſteadfaſt relying on his veracity and goodneſs. St. *Paul Heb.* XI. 6. tells us; *Without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God:* But at the ſame time tells us what Faith that is. *For*, ſays he, *He that cometh to God, muſt believe that he is; And that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* He muſt be perſwaded of God's Mercy and good Will to thoſe, who ſeek to obey him; And reſt aſſured of his rewarding thoſe who rely on him, for whatever, either by the light of Nature, or particular Promiſes, he has revealed to them of his tender Mercies; and taught them to expect from his Bounty. This deſcription of *Faith* (that we might not miſtake what he means

by that *Faith*, without which we cannot pleaſe God, and which recommended the Saints of Old) St. *Paul* places in the middle of the Liſt of thoſe who were Eminent for their *Faith*; And whom he ſets as Patterns to the converted *Hebrews*, under Perſecution; to encourage them to perſiſt in their confidence of Deliverance by the Coming of *Jeſus Chriſt*; And in their belief of the Promiſes they now had under the Goſpel: Not to *draw back* from the Hope that was ſet before them; Nor Apoſtatize from the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion. This is plain from *v.* 35—38. of the precedent Chapter: *Caſt not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of Reward. For ye have great need of perſiſting, or Perſeverance*; (for ſo the *Greek* word ſignifies here, which our Tranſlation renders *Patience. Vid. Luke* VIII. 15.) *That after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the Promiſe. For yet a little while, and he that ſhall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the juſt ſhall live by Faith. But if any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.*

The

The Examples of *Faith*, which St. *Paul* enumerates and propoſes in the following words, *Chap.* XI. plainly ſhew, that the *Faith* whereby thoſe Believers of old pleaſed God, was nothing but a ſteadfaſt relyance on the Goodneſs and Faithfulneſs of God, for thoſe good things, which either the light of Nature, or particular Promiſes, had given them grounds to hope for. Of what avail this *Faith* was with God, we may ſee, *v.* 4. *By Faith* Abel *offered unto God a more excellent Sacrifice than* Cain; *by which he obtained witneſs that he was Righteous.* V. 5. *By Faith* Enoch *was tranſlated, that he ſhould not ſee Death: For before his tranſlation he had this Teſtimony, that he pleaſed God.* V. 7. Noah, *being warned of God of things not ſeen as yet*; being wary, *by Faith prepared an Ark, to the ſaving of his Houſe; By the which he condemned the World, and became Heir of the Righteouſneſs which is by Faith.* And what it was that God ſo graciouſly accepted and rewarded, we are told, *v.* 11. *Through Faith alſo* Sarah *her ſelf received ſtrength to conceive ſeed, and was delivered of a Child; when ſhe*

ſhe was paſt age. How ſhe came to obtain this Grace from God, the Apoſtle tells us; *Becauſe ſhe judged him Faithful who had promiſed.* Thoſe therefore who pleaſed God, and were accepted by him before the Coming of *Chriſt*, did it only by believing the Promiſes, and relying on the Goodneſs of God, as far as he had revealed it to them. For the Apoſtle, in the following words, tells us, *v.* 13. *Theſe all died in Faith, not having received* (the accompliſhment of) *the Promiſes; but having ſeen them afar off: And were perſwaded of them, and embraced them.* This was all that was required of them; to be perſwaded of, and embrace the Promiſes which they had. They could be *perſwaded of* no more than was propoſed to them; *Embrace* no more than was revealed; according to the Promiſes they had received, and the Diſpenſations they were under. And if the Faith of things *ſeen afar off*; If their truſting in God for the Promiſes he then gave them; If a belief of the *Meſſiah* to come; were ſufficient to render thoſe who lived in the Ages before *Chriſt*, Acceptable to God, and Righteous

teous before him; I deſire thoſe who tell us, that God will not, (nay, ſome go ſo far as to ſay) cannot accept any who do not believe every Article of their particular Creeds and Syſtems; to conſider, why God, out of his Infinite Mercy, cannot as well Juſtifie Man now for believing *Jeſus of Nazareth* to be the promiſed *Meſſiah*, the King and Deliverer; as thoſe heretofore, who believed only that God would, according to his Promiſe, in due time ſend the *Meſſiah*, to be a King and Deliverer.

There is another Difficulty often to be met with, which ſeems to have ſomething of more weight in it: And that is, that though the *Faith* of thoſe before *Chriſt*, (believing that God would ſend the *Meſſiah*, to be a Prince, and a Saviour to his People, as he had promiſed;) And the *Faith* of thoſe ſince his time, (believing *Jeſus* to be that *Meſſiah*, promiſed and ſent by God) ſhall be accounted to them for Righteouſneſs, Yet what ſhall become of all the reſt of Mankind; who having never heard of the Promiſe or News of a Saviour, not a word of a *Meſſiah* to be

be ſent, or that was come, have had no thought or belief concerning him?

To this I Anſwer; That God will require of every man, *According to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.* He will not expect the Improvement of Ten Talents, where he gave but One; Nor require any one ſhould believe a Promiſe, of which he has never heard. The Apoſtle's Reaſoning, *Rom.* X. 14. is very juſt: *How ſhall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?* But though there be many, who being ſtrangers to the Common-wealth of *Iſrael*, were alſo ſtrangers to the Oracles of God committed to that People; Many, to whom the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah* never came, and ſo were never in a capacity to believe or reject that Revelation; Yet God had, by the Light of Reaſon, revealed to all Mankind, who would make uſe of that Light, that he was Good and Merciful. The ſame ſpark of the Divine Nature and Knowledge in Man, which making him a Man, ſhewed him the Law he was under as a Man; Shewed him alſo the way of Attoning the merciful, kind, compaſſionate Author and

and Father of him and his Being, when he had tranſgreſſed that Law. He that made uſe of this Candle of the Lord, ſo far as to find what was his Duty; could not miſs to find alſo the way to Reconciliation and Forgiveneſs, when he had failed of his Duty: Though if he uſed not his Reaſon this way; if he put out, or neglected this Light; he might, perhaps, ſee neither.

The Law is the eternal, immutable Standard of Right. And a part of that Law is, that a man ſhould forgive, not only his Children, but his Enemies; upon their Repentance, asking Pardon, and Amendment. And therefore he could not doubt that the Author of this Law, and God of Patience and Conſolation, who is rich in Mercy, would forgive his frail Off-ſpring; if they acknowledged their Faults, diſapproved the Iniquity of their Tranſgreſſions, beg'd his Pardon, and reſolved in earneſt for the future to conform their Actions to this Rule, which they owned to be Juſt and Right. This way of Reconciliation, this hope of Attonement, the Light of Nature revealed to them. And the Revelation of the Goſpel having,

ving ſaid nothing to the contrary, leaves them to ſtand and fall to their own Father and Maſter, whoſe Goodneſs and Mercy is over all his Works.

I know ſome are forward to urge that place of the *Acts*, *Chap.* IV. as contrary to this. The words, *v.* 10. & 12. ſtand thus: *Be it known unto you all, and to all the People of* Iſrael, *that by the Name of Jeſus Chriſt of* Nazareth, *whom ye crucified, whom God raiſed from the dead, even by him doth this man,* [*i. e.* The lame man reſtored by *Peter*] *ſtand here before you whole. This is the ſtone which is ſet at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the Corner. Neither is there Salvation in any other: For there is none other name under Heaven given among men, in which we muſt be ſaved.* Which, in ſhort, is; that *Jeſus* is the only true *Meſſiah*; Neither is there any other Perſon but he given to be a Mediator between God and Man, in whoſe Name we may ask and hope for Salvation.

It will here poſſibly be asked, *Quorſum perditio hæc?* What need was there of a Saviour? What Advantage have we by *Jeſus Chriſt?* It

It is enough to juſtifie the fitneſs of any thing to be done, by reſolving it into the *Wiſdom of God*, who has done it; Whereof our narrow Underſtandings, and ſhort Views may utterly incapacitate us to judge. We know little of this viſible, and nothing at all of the ſtate of that Intellectual World; wherein are infinite numbers and degrees of Spirits out of the reach of our ken or gueſs; And therefore know not what Tranſactions there were between God and our Saviour, in reference to his Kingdom. We know not what need there was to ſet up a Head and a Chieftain, in oppoſition to *The Prince of this World, the Prince of the Power of the Air*, &c. Whereof there are more than obſcure intimations in Scripture. And we ſhall take too much upon us, if we ſhall call God's Wiſdom or Providence to Account, and pertly condemn for needleſs, all that that our weak, and perhaps biaſſed *Underſtandings*, cannot Account for.

Though this general Anſwer be Reply enough to the forementioned Demand, and ſuch as a Rational Man, or fair ſearcher after Truth, will acquieſce in;

in; Yet in this particular caſe, the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God has ſhewn it ſelf ſo viſibly to common Apprehenſions, that it hath furniſhed us abundantly wherewithal to ſatisfie the Curious and Inquiſitive; who will not take a Bleſſing, unleſs they be inſtructed what need they had of it, and why it was beſtowed upon them. The great and many Advantages we receive by the coming of *Jeſus* the *Meſſiah*, will ſhew that it was not without need, that he was ſent into the World.

The Evidence of our Saviour's *Miſſion* from Heaven is ſo great, in the multitude of Miracles he did before all ſorts of People; (which the Divine Providence and Wiſdom has ſo ordered, that they never were, nor could be denied by any of the Enemies and Oppoſers of Chriſtianity,) that what he delivered cannot but be received as the Oracles of God, and unqueſtionable Verity.

Though the Works of Nature, in every part of them, ſufficiently Evidence a Deity; Yet the World made ſo little uſe of their Reaſon, that they ſaw him not; Where even by the impreſ-

impreſſions of himſelf he was eaſie to be found. Senſe and Luſt blinded their minds in ſome; And a careleſs Inadvertency in others; And fearful Apprehenſions in moſt (who either believed there were, or could not but ſuſpect there might be, Superiour unknown Beings) gave them up into the hands of their Prieſts, to fill their Heads with falſe Notions of the Deity, and their Worſhip with fooliſh Rites, as they pleaſed: And what Dread or Craft once began, Devotion ſoon made Sacred, and Religion immutable. In this ſtate of Darkneſs and Ignorance of the true God, Vice and Superſtition held the World. Nor could any help be had or hoped for from *Reaſon*; which could not be heard, and was judged to have nothing to do in the caſe: The Prieſts every where, to ſecure their Empire, having excluded *Reaſon* from having any thing to do in Religion. And in the croud of wrong Notions, and invented Rites, the World had almoſt loſt the ſight of the One only True God. The Rational and thinking part of Mankind, 'tis true, when they ſought after him, found the One,

Supream, Inviſible God: But if they acknowledged and worſhipped him, it was only in their own minds. They kept this Truth locked up in their own breaſt as a Secret, nor ever durſt venture it amongſt the People; much leſs amongſt the Prieſts, thoſe wary Guardians of their own Creeds and Profitable Inventions. Hence we ſee that *Reaſon*, ſpeaking never ſo clearly to the Wiſe and Vertuous, had never Authority enough to prevail on the Multitude; and to perſwade the Societies of Men, that there was but One God, that alone was to be owned and worſhipped. The Belief and Worſhip of One God, was the National Religion of the *Iſraelites* alone: And if we will conſider it, it was introduced and ſupported amongſt that People by *Revelation*. They were in *Goſhen*, and had Light; whilſt the reſt of the World were in almoſt *Egyptian* Darkneſs, *without God in the World*. There was no part of Mankind, who had quicker Parts, or improved them more; that had a greater light of Reaſon, or followed it farther in all ſorts of Speculations, than the *Athenians*: And yet we

we find but one *Socrates* amongſt them, that oppoſed and laughed at their Polytheiſm, and wrong Opinions of the Deity; And we ſee how they rewarded him for it. Whatſoever *Plato*, and the ſobereſt of the Philoſophers thought of the Nature and Being of the One God, they were fain, in their outward Profeſſions and Worſhip, to go with the Herd, and keep to the Religion eſtabliſhed by Law; Which what it was, and how it had diſpoſed the mind of theſe knowing, and quick-ſighted *Grecians*, St. *Paul* tells us, *Acts* XVII. 22—29. *Ye men of Athens*, ſays he, *I perceive that in all things ye are too ſuperſtitious. For as I paſſed by, and beheld your Devotions, I found an Altar with this Inſcription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you. God that made the World, and all things therein, ſeeing that he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in Temples made with hands: Neither is worſhipped with mens hands, as though he needed any thing, ſeeing he giveth unto all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one Blood all the*

Nations of Men, for to dwell on the face of the Earth; And hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their Habitations; That they ſhould ſeek the Lord, if haply they might feel him out, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. Here he tells the *Athenians*, that they, and the reſt of the World (given up to Superſtition) whatever Light there was in the Works of Creation and Providence, to lead them to the True God, yet they few of them found him. He was every where near them; yet they were but like People groping and feeling for ſomething in the dark, and did not ſee him with a full clear day-light; *But thought the Godhead like to Gold, and Silver, and Stone, graven by Art and man's device.*

In this ſtate of Darkneſs and Error, in reference to the *True God*, our Saviour found the World. But the clear Revelation he brought with him, diſſipated this Darkneſs; made *the One Inviſible True God* known to the World: And that with ſuch Evidence and Energy, that *Polytheiſm* and *Idolatry* hath no where been able to withſtand it.

it. But where ever the Preaching of the Truth he delivered, and the Light of the Goſpel hath come, thoſe Miſts have been diſpelled. And in effect we ſee that ſince our Saviour's time, the *Belief of One God* has prevailed and ſpread it ſelf over the face of the Earth. For even to the Light that the *Meſſiah* brought into the World with him, we muſt aſcribe the owning, and Profeſſion of *One God*, which the *Mahumetan* Religion had derived and borrowed from it. So that in this ſenſe it is certainly and manifeſtly true of our Saviour, what St. *John* ſays of him; 1 *John* III. 8. *For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the Devil.* This Light the World needed, and this Light it received from him: That there is but *One God*, and he *Eternal*; *Inviſible*; Not like to any viſible Objects, nor to be repreſented by them.

If it be asked, whether the Revelation to the *Patriarchs* by *Moſes*, did not teach this, and why that was not enough? The Anſwer is obvious; that however clearly the Knowledge of One Inviſible God, maker of Heaven and

Earth, was revealed to them; Yet that Revelation was ſhut up in a little corner of the World; amongſt a People by that very Law, which they received with it, excluded from a Commerce and Communication with the reſt of mankind. The Gentile World in our Saviour's time, and ſeveral Ages before, could have no Atteſtation of the Miracles, on which the *Hebrews* built their Faith, but from the *Jews* themſelves; A People not known to the greateſt part of mankind; Contemned and thought vilely of by thoſe Nations that did know them; And therefore very unfit and unable to propagate the Doctrine of *One God* in the World, and diffuſe it through the Nations of the Earth, by the ſtrength and force of that Ancient Revelation, upon which they had received it. But our Saviour, when he came, threw down this Wall of Partition; And did not confine his Miracles or Meſſage to the Land of *Canaan*, or the Worſhippers at *Jeruſalem*. But he himſelf preached at *Samaria*, and did miracles in the Borders of *Tyre* and *Sydon*, and before multitudes of People gathered from

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all Quarters. And after his Reſurrection, ſent his Apoſtles amongſt the Nations, accompanied with Miracles; which were done in all Parts ſo frequently, and before ſo many Witneſſes of all ſorts, in broad day-light, that, as I have often obſerved, the Enemies of Chriſtianity have never dared to deny them; No, not *Julian* himſelf: Who neither wanted Skill nor Power to enquire into the Truth; Nor would have failed to have proclaimed and expoſed it, if he could have detected any falſhood in the Hiſtory of the Goſpel; or found the leaſt ground to queſtion the Matter of Fact publiſhed of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles. The Number and Evidence of the Miracles done by our Saviour and his Followers, by the power and force of Truth, bore down this mighty and accompliſhed Emperour, and all his Parts, in his own Dominions. He durſt not deny ſo plain Matter of Fact; Which being granted, the truth of our Saviour's Doctrine and Miſſion unavoidably follows; notwithſtanding whatſoever Artful Suggeſtions his Wit could invent, or Malice ſhould offer, to the contrary.

2. Next to the Knowledge of one God; Maker of all things; A clear *knowledge of their Duty* was wanting to Mankind. This part of Knowledge, though cultivated with ſome care, by ſome of the Heathen Philoſophers; Yet got little footing among the People. All Men indeed, under pain of diſpleaſing the Gods, were to frequent the Temples: Every one went to their Sacrifices and Services: But the Prieſts made it not their buſineſs to teach them *Virtue*. If they were diligent in their Obſervations and Ceremonies; Punctual in their Feaſts and Solemnities, and the tricks of Religion; The holy Tribe aſſured them, the Gods were pleaſed; and they looked no farther. Few went to the Schools of the Philoſophers, to be inſtructed in their Duties; And to know what was Good and Evil in their Actions. The Prieſts ſold the better Pennyworths, and therefore had all the Cuſtoms. Luſtrations and Proceſſions were much eaſier than a clean Conſcience, and a ſteady courſe of Virtue; And an expiatory Sacrifice, that attoned for the want of it, was much more convenient

ent, than a ſtrict and holy Life. No wonder then, that Religion was every where diſtinguiſhed from, and preferred to *Virtue*; And that it was dangerous Hereſy and Prophaneneſs to think the contrary. So much *Virtue* as was neceſſary to hold Societies together; and to contribute to the quiet of Governments; The Civil Laws of Commonwealths taught, and forced upon Men that lived under Magiſtrates. But theſe Laws, being for the moſt part made by ſuch who had no other aims but their own Power, reached no farther than thoſe things, that would ſerve to tie Men together in ſubjection; Or at moſt, were directly to conduce to the Proſperity and Temporal Happineſs of any People. But *Natural Religion* in its full extent, was no where, that I know, taken care of by the force of Natural Reaſon. It ſhould ſeem by the little that has hitherto been done in it; That 'tis too hard a thing for unaſſiſted Reaſon, to eſtabliſh Morality in all its parts upon its true foundations; with a clear and convincing light. And 'tis at leaſt a ſurer and ſhorter way, to the Apprehenſions of the

the vulgar, and maſs of Mankind; That one manifeſtly ſent from God, and coming with viſible Authority from him, ſhould as a King and Law-maker tell them their Duties; and require their Obedience; Than leave it to the long, and ſometimes intricate deductions of Reaſon, to be made out to them: Which the greateſt part of Mankind have neither leiſure to weigh; nor, for want of Education and Uſe, skill to judge of. We ſee how unſucceſsful in this, the attempts of Philoſophers were before our Saviour's time. How ſhort their ſeveral Syſtems came of the perfection of a true and compleat *Morality* is very viſible. And if, ſince that, the Chriſtian Philoſophers have much outdone them; yet we may obſerve, that the firſt knowledge of the truths they have added, are owing to Revelation: Though as ſoon as they are heard and conſidered, they are found to be agreeable to Reaſon; and ſuch as can by no means be contradicted. Every one may obſerve a great many truths which he receives at firſt from others, and readily aſſents to, as conſonant to reaſon; which he would have found

found it hard, and perhaps beyond his ſtrength to have diſcovered himſelf. Native and Original truth, is not ſo eaſily wrought out of the Mine, as we who have it delivered, ready dug and faſhon'd into our hands, are apt to imagine. And how often at Fifty or Threeſcore years old are thinking Men told, what they wonder how they could miſs thinking of? Which yet their own Contemplations did not, and poſſibly never would have helped them to. Experience ſhews that the knowledge of Morality, by meer natural light, (how agreeable ſoever it be to it) makes but a ſlow progreſs, and little advance in the World. And the reaſon of it is not hard to be found; in Men's Neceſſities, Paſſions, Vices, and miſtaken Intereſts, which turn their thoughts another way. And the deſigning Leaders, as well as following Herd, find it not to their purpoſe to imploy much of their Meditations this way. Or whatever elſe was the cauſe, 'tis plain in fact; Humane reaſon unaſſiſted, failed Men in its great and proper buſineſs of *Morality*. It never from unqueſtionable Principles, by clear deductions, made out

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an entire Body of the *Law of Nature*. And he that ſhall collect all the Moral Rules of the Philoſophers, and compare them with thoſe contained in the New Teſtament, will find them to come ſhort of the *Morality* delivered by our Saviour, and taught by his Apoſtles; A College made up for the moſt part of ignorant, but inſpired Fiſhermen.

Though yet, if any one ſhould think, that out of the ſayings of the Wiſe Heathens, before our Saviour's time, there might be a Collection made of all thoſe Rules of *Morality*, which are to be found in the Chriſtian Religion; Yet this would not at all hinder, but that the World nevertheleſs ſtood as much in need of our Saviour, and the *Morality* delivered by him. Let it be granted (though not true) that all the *Moral Precepts* of the Goſpel were known by ſome Body or other, amongſt Mankind, before. But where or how, or of what uſe, is not conſidered. Suppoſe they may be picked up here and there; Some from *Solon* and *Bias* in *Greece*; Others from *Tully* in *Italy*: And to compleat the Work, let *Confutius*, as far as *China*, be conſulted; And *Anacarſis* the

the *Scythian* contribute his ſhare. What will all this do, to give the World a *compleat morality*; That may be to Mankind, the unqueſtionable Rule of Life and Manners? I will not here urge the impoſſibility of collecting from men, ſo far diſtant from one another, in time, and place, and languages. I will ſuppoſe there was a *Stobeus* in thoſe times, who had gathered the *Moral ſayings*, from all the Sages of the World. What would this amount to, towards being a ſteady Rule; A certain tranſcript of a Law that we are under? Did the ſaying of *Ariſtippus*, or *Confutius*, give it an Authority? Was *Zeno* a Lawgiver to Mankind? If not, what he or any other Philoſopher delivered, was but a ſaying of his. Mankind might hearken to it, or reject it, as they pleaſed; Or as it ſuited their intereſt, paſſions, principles or humours. They were under no Obligation: The Opinion of this or that Philoſopher, was of no Authority. And if it were, you muſt take all he ſaid under the ſame Character. All his dictates muſt go for Law, certain and true; Or none of them. And then, If

you

you will take any of the Moral ſayings of *Epicurus* (many whereof *Seneca* quotes, with eſteem and approbation) for Precepts of the *Law of Nature*; You muſt take all the reſt of his Doctrine for ſuch too; Or elſe his Authority ceaſes: And ſo no more is to be received from him, or any of the Sages of old, for parts of the *Law of Nature*, as carrying with it an obligation to be obeyed, but what they prove to be ſo. But ſuch a Body of *Ethicks*, proved to be the Law of Nature, from principles of Reaſon, and reaching all the Duties of Life; I think no body will ſay the World had before our Saviour's time. 'Tis not enough, that there were up and down ſcattered ſayings of wiſe Men, conformable to right Reaſon. The Law of Nature, was the Law of Convenience too: And 'tis no wonder, that thoſe Men of Parts, and ſtudious of Virtue; (Who had occaſion to think on any particular part of it,) ſhould by meditation light on the right, even from the obſervable Convenience and beauty of it; Without making out its obligation from the true Principles of the Law of Nature, and

foundations

foundations of *Morality*. But theſe incoherent apohtegms of Philoſophers, and wiſe Men; however excellent in themſelves, and well intended by them; could never make a Morality, whereof the World could be convinced, And with certainty depend on. Whatſoever ſhould thus be univerſally uſeful, as a ſtandard to which Men ſhould conform their Manners, muſt have its Authority either from Reaſon or Revelation. 'Tis not every Writer of Morals, or Compiler of it from others, that can thereby be erected into a Law-giver to Mankind; and a dictator of Rules, which are therefore valid, becauſe they are to be found in his Books; under the Authority of this or that Philoſopher. He that any one will pretend to ſet up in this kind, and have his Rules paſs for authentique directions; muſt ſhew, that either he builds his Doctrine upon Principles of Reaſon, ſelf-evident in themſelves; or that he deduces all the parts of it from thence, by clear and evident demonſtration: Or muſt ſhew his Commiſſion from Heaven; That he comes with Authority from God, to deliver his

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Will and Commands to the World. In the former way, no body that I know before our Saviour's time, ever did; or went about to give us a *Morality*. 'Tis true there is a *Law of Nature*. But who is there that ever did, or undertook to give it us all entire, as a Law; No more, nor no leſs, than what was contained in, and had the obligation of that Law? Who, ever made out all the parts of it; Put them together; And ſhewed the World their obligation? Where was there any ſuch Code, that Mankind might have recourſe to, as their unerring Rule, before our Saviour's time? If there was not, 'tis plain, there was need of one to give us ſuch a *Morality*; Such a Law, which might be the ſure guide of thoſe who had a deſire to go right; And if they had a mind, need not miſtake their Duty; But might be certain when they had performed, when failed in it. Such a *Law of Morality*, Jeſus Chriſt hath given us in the New Teſtament; But by the later of theſe ways, by Revelation. We have from him a full and ſufficient Rule for our direction; And conformable to that of Reaſon. But the

the truth and obligation of its Precepts; hath its force, and is put paſt doubt to us, by the evidence of his Miſſion. He was ſent by God: His Miracles ſhew it; And the Authority of God in his Precepts cannot be queſtioned. Here *Morality* has a ſure Standard, that Revelation vouches, and Reaſon cannot gainſay, nor queſtion; but both together witneſs to come from God the great Law-maker. And ſuch an one as this out of the New Teſtament, I think the World never had, nor can any one ſay is any where elſe to be found. Let me ask any one, who is forward to think that the Doctrine of *Morality* was full and clear in the World, at our Saviour's Birth; Whether would he have directed *Brutus* and *Caſſius*, (both Men of Parts and Virtue, the one whereof believed, and the other diſbelieved a future Being) to be ſatisfied in the Rules and Obligations of all the parts of their Duties; If they ſhould have asked him where they might find the Law, they were to live by, and by which they ſhould be charged or acquitted, as guilty or innocent? If to the ſayings of the Wiſe, and

the Declarations of Philoſophers; He ſends them into a wild Wood of uncertainty, to an endleſs maze; from which they ſhould never get out: If to the Religions of the World, yet worſe: And if to their own Reaſon, he refers them to that which had ſome light and certainty; but yet had hitherto failed all Mankind in a perfect Rule; And we ſee, reſolved not the doubts that had riſen amongſt the Studious and Thinking Philoſophers; Nor had yet been able to convince the Civilized parts of the World, that they had not given, nor could without a Crime, take away the Lives of their Children, by Expoſing them.

If any one ſhall think to excuſe humane Nature, by laying blame on Men's *negligence*, that they did not carry Morality to an higher pitch; and make it out entire in every part, with that clearneſs of demonſtration which ſome think it capable of; He helps not the matter. Be the cauſe what it will, our Saviour found Mankind under a Corruption of Manners and Principles, which Ages after Ages had prevailed, and muſt be confeſſed

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was not in a way or tendency to be mended. The Rules of Morality were in different Countries and Sects, different. And natural Reaſon no where had, nor was like to Cure the Defects and Errors in them. Thoſe juſt meaſures of Right and Wrong, which neceſſity had any where introduced, the Civil Laws preſcribed, or Philoſophy recommended; Stood not on their true Foundations. They were looked on as bonds of Society, and Conveniencies of common Life, and laudable Practiſes. But where was it that their Obligation was throughly known and allowed, and they received as Precepts of a Law; Of the higheſt Law, the Law of Nature? That could not be, without a clear knowledge and acknowledgment of the Law-maker, and the great Rewards and Puniſhments, for thoſe that would or would not obey him. But the Religion of the Heathens, as was before obſerved; little concerned it ſelf in their Morals. The Prieſts that delivered the Oracles of Heaven, and pretended to ſpeak from the Gods; Spoke little of Virtue and a good Life. And on the other ſide,

the Philoſophers who ſpoke from Reaſon, made not much mention of the Deity in their *Ethicks*. They depended on Reaſon and her Oracles; which contain nothing but Truth. But yet ſome parts of that Truth lye too deep for our Natural Powers eaſily to reach, and make plain and viſible to mankind, without ſome Light from above to direct them. When Truths are once known to us, though by Tradition, we are apt to be favourable to our own Parts; And aſcribe to our own Underſtandings the Diſcovery of what, in truth, we borrowed from others; Or, at leaſt, finding we can prove what at firſt we learnt from others, we are forward to conclude it an obvious Truth, which, if we had ſought, we could not have miſſed. Nothing ſeems hard to our Underſtandings, that is once known; And becauſe what we ſee we ſee with our own Eyes, we are apt to over-look or forget the help we had from others, who firſt ſhewed and pointed it out to us, as if we were not at all beholden to them for that Knowledge; Which Being of Truths we now are ſatisfied of, we conclude our own

Faculties

Faculties would have lead us into without any aſſiſtance; And that we know them, as they did, by the ſtrength and perſpicuity of our own minds, only they had the luck to be before us. Thus the whole ſtock of Human Knowledge is claimed by every one, as his private Poſſeſſion, as ſoon as he (profiting by others Diſcoveries) has got it into his own mind; And ſo it is: But not properly by his own ſingle Induſtry, nor of his own Acquiſition. He ſtudies, 'tis true, and takes pains to make a progreſs in what others have delivered; But their pains were of another ſort, who firſt brought thoſe Truths to light, which he afterwards derives from them. He that Travels the Roads now, applauds his own ſtrength and legs, that have carried him ſo far in ſuch a ſcantling of time; And aſcribes all to his own Vigor, little conſidering how much he ows to their pains, who cleared the Woods, drained the Bogs, built the Bridges, and made the Ways paſſable; without which he might have toiled much with little progreſs. A great many things we have been bred up in the belief of from our Cradles,

dles, (and are Notions grown Familiar, and as it were Natural to us, under the Goſpel,) we take for unqueſtionable obvious Truths, and eaſily demonſtrable; without conſidering how long we might have been in doubt or ignorance of them, had Revelation been ſilent. And many are beholden to Revelation, who do not acknowlede it. 'Tis no diminiſhing to Revelation, that Reaſon gives its Suffrage too to the Truths Revelation has diſcovered. But 'tis our miſtake to think, that becauſe Reaſon confirms them to us, we had the firſt certain knowledge of them from thence, and in that clear Evidence we now poſſeſs them. The contrary is manifeſt, in the *defective Morality of the Gentils* before our Saviour's time; and the want of Reformation in the Principles and Meaſures of it, as well as Practice. Philoſophy ſeemed to have ſpent its ſtrength, and done its utmoſt; Or if it ſhould have gone farther, as we ſee it did not, and from undenyable Principles given us *Ethicks* in a Science like Mathematicks in every part demonſtrable, this yet would not have been ſo effectual to man in this imperfect ſtate,

ſtate, nor proper for the Cure. The bulk of mankind have not leiſure nor capacity for Demonſtration; nor can carry a train of Proofs; which in that way they muſt always depend upon for Conviction, and cannot be required to aſſent till they ſee the Demonſtration. Wherever they ſtick, the Teachers are always put upon Proof, and muſt clear the Doubt by a Thread of coherent deductions from the firſt Principle, how long, or how intricate ſoever that be. And you may as ſoon hope to have all the Day-Labourers and Tradeſmen, the Spinſters and Dairy Maids perfect Mathematicians, as to have them perfect in *Ethicks* this way. Hearing plain Commands, is the ſure and only courſe to bring them to Obedience and Practice. The greateſt part cannot know, and therefore they muſt believe. And I ask, whether one coming from Heaven in the Power of God, in full and clear Evidence and Demonſtration of Miracles, giving plain and direct Rules of *Morality* and Obedience, be not likelier to enlighten the bulk of Mankind, and ſet them right in their Duties, and bring them to do

them, than by Reaſoning with them from general Notions and Principles of Humane Reaſon? And were all the Duties of Humane Life clearly demonſtrated; yet I conclude, when well conſidered, that Method of teaching men their Duties, would be thought proper only for a few, who had much Leiſure, improved Underſtandings, and were uſed to abſtract Reaſonings. But the Inſtruction of the People were beſt ſtill to be left to the Precepts and Principles of the Goſpel. The healing of the Sick, the reſtoring ſight to the Blind by a word, the raiſing, and being raiſed from the Dead, are matters of Fact, which they can without difficulty conceive; And that he who does ſuch things, muſt do them by the aſſiſtance of a Divine Power. Theſe things lye level to the ordinarieſt Apprehenſion; He that can diſtinguiſh between ſick and well, Lame and ſound, dead and alive, is capable of this Doctrine. To one who is once perſwaded that Jeſus Chriſt was ſent by God to be a King, and a Saviour of thoſe who do believe in him; All his Commands become Principles: There needs no other Proof for

for the truth of what he ſays, but that he ſaid it. And then there needs no more but to read the inſpired Books, to be inſtructed: All the Duties of Morality lye there clear, and plain, and eaſy to be underſtood. And here I appeal, whether this be not the ſureſt, the ſafeſt, and moſt effectual way of teaching: Eſpecially if we add this farther conſideration; That as it ſuits the loweſt Capacities of Reaſonable Creatures, ſo it reaches and ſatisfies, Nay, enlightens the higheſt. And the moſt elevated Underſtandings cannot but ſubmit to the Authority of this Doctrine as Divine; Which coming from the mouths of a company of illiterate men, hath not only the atteſtation of Miracles, but reaſon to confirm it; Since they delivered no Precepts but ſuch, as though Reaſon of it ſelf had not clearly made out, Yet it could not but aſſent to when thus diſcovered; And think itſelf indebted for the Diſcovery. The Credit and Authority our Saviour and his Apoſtles had over the minds of Men, by the Miracles they did; Tempted them not to mix (as we find in that of all the

Sects

Sects of Philoſophers, and other Religions) any Conceits; any wrong Rules; any thing tending to their own by-intereſt, or that of a Party; in their Morality. No tang of prepoſſeſſion or phanſy; No footſteps of Pride or Vanity, Oſtentation or Ambition, appears to have a hand in it. It is all pure, all ſincere; Nothing too much, nothing wanting: But ſuch a compleat Rule of Life, as the wiſeſt Men muſt acknowledge, tends entirely to the good of Mankind: And that all would be happy, if all would practiſe it.

3. The outward forms of *Worſhipping the Deity*, wanted a Reformation. Stately Buildings, coſtly Ornaments, peculiar and uncouth Habits, And a numerous huddle of pompous, phantaſtical, cumberſome Ceremonies, every where attended Divine Worſhip. This, as it had the peculiar Name, ſo it was thought the principal part, if not the whole of Religion. Nor could this poſſibly be amended whilſt the Jewiſh Ritual ſtood; And there was ſo much of it mixed with the Worſhip of the True God. To this alſo our Saviour, with the knowledge of the infinite inviſible

viſible ſupream Spirit, brought a Remedy; in a plain, ſpiritual, and ſuitable Worſhip. *Jeſus* ſays to the Woman of *Samaria*, *The hour cometh, when ye ſhall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at* Jeruſalem, *worſhip the Father. But the True Worſhippers, ſhall worſhip the Father, both in Spirit and in Truth; For the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip.* To be Worſhipped in Spirit and in Truth; With application of Mind and ſincerity of Heart, was what God henceforth only required. Magnificent Temples, and confinement to certain Places, were now no longer neceſſary for his Worſhip; Which by a Pure Heart might be performed any where. The ſplendor and diſtinction of Habits, and pomp of Ceremonies, and all outſide Performances, might now be ſpared. God who was a Spirit, and made known to be ſo, required none of thoſe; but the Spirit only: And that in publick Aſſemblies, (where ſome Actions muſt lie open to the view of the World) All that could appear and be ſeen, ſhould be done decently, and in order, and to Edification. Decency, Order, and Edification, were to regulate all their publick

publick Acts of Worſhip; And beyond what theſe required, the outward appearance, (which was of little value in the Eyes of God) was not to go. Having ſhut out indecency and confuſions out of their Aſſemblies, they need not be ſolicitous about uſeleſs Ceremonies. Praiſes and Prayer, humbly offered up to the Deity, was the Worſhip he now demanded; And in theſe every one was to look after his own Heart, And know that it was that alone which God had regard to, and accepted.

4. Another great advantage received by our Saviour, is the great incouragementhe brought to a virtuous and pious Life: Great enough to ſurmount the difficulties and obſtacles that lie in the way to it; And reward the pains and hardſhips of thoſe, who ſtuck firm to their Duties, and ſuffered for the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience. The Portion of the Righteous has been in all Ages taken notice of, to be pretty ſcanty in this World. Virtue and Proſperity, do not often accompany one another; And therefore Virtue ſeldom had many Followers. And 'tis no wonder She prevailed not much in a State, where

where the Inconveniencies that attended her were viſible, and at hand; And the Rewards doubtful, and at a diſtance. Mankind, who are and muſt be allowed to purſue their Happineſs; Nay, cannot be hindred; Could not but think themſelves excuſed from a ſtrict obſervation of Rules, which appeared ſo little to conſiſt with their chief End, Happineſs; Whilſt they kept them from the enjoyments of this Life; And they had little evidence and ſecurity of another. 'Tis true, they might have argued the other way, and concluded; That, Becauſe the Good were moſt of them ill treated here, There was another place where they ſhould meet with better uſage: But 'tis plain, they did not. Their thoughts of another Life were at beſt obſcure: And their expectations uncertain. Of *Manes*, and Ghoſts, and the ſhades of departed Men, There was ſome talk; But little certain, and leſs minded. They had the Names of *Styx* and *Acheron*; Of Eliſian fields, and ſeats of the Bleſſed: But they had them generally from their Poets, mixed with their Fables. And ſo they looked more like the Inventions of

Wit,

Wit and Ornaments of Poetry, than the ſerious perſwaſions of the grave and the ſober. They came to them bundled up amongſt their tales; And for tales they took them. And that which rendred them more ſuſpected, and leſs uſeful to virtue, was, that the Philoſophers ſeldom ſet on their Rules on Men's Minds and Practiſes, by conſideration of another Life. The chief of their Arguments were from the excellency of Virtue: And the higheſt they generally went, was the exalting of humane Nature, Whoſe Perfection lay in virtue. And if the Prieſt at any time talked of the Ghoſts below, and a Life after this, it was only to keep Men to their Superſtitious and Idolatrous Rites; Whereby the uſe of this Doctrine was loſt to the credulous Multitude; And its belief to the quicker ſighted, who ſuſpected it preſently of Prieſt-craft. Before our Saviour's time, the Doctrine of a future State, though it were not wholly hid, yet it was not clearly known in the World. 'Twas an imperfect view of Reaſon; Or, perhaps the decay'd remains of an ancient Tradition; which rather ſeemed to float

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on Mens Phanſies, than ſink deep into their Hearts. It was ſomething, they knew not what, between being and not being. Something in Man they imagined might ſcape the Grave: But a a perfect compleat Life of an Eternal duration, after this; was what entred little into their thoughts, and leſs into their perſwaſions. And they were ſo far from being clear herein, that we ſee no Nation of the World publickly profeſſed it, and built upon it: No Religion taught it: And 'twas no where made an Article of Faith, and Principle of Religion till Jeſus Chriſt came; Of whom it is truly ſaid, that he at his appearing *brought light and immortality to light*. And that not only in the clear Revelation of it; And in inſtances ſhewn of Men raiſed from the Dead; But he has given us an unqueſtionable aſſurance and pledge of it, in his own Reſurrection and Aſcention into Heaven. How hath this one truth changed the Nature of things in the World? And given the advantage to Piety over all that could tempt or deter Men from it. The Philoſophers indeed ſhewed the beauty of Virtue:

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They ſet her off ſo as drew Mens Eyes and approbation to her: But leaving her unendowed, very few were willing to eſpouſe her. The generality could not refuſe her their eſteem and commendation; But ſtill turned their Backs on her and forſook her, as a match not for their turn. But now there being put into the Scales, on her ſide, *An exceeding and immortal weight of Glory*; Intereſt is come about to her; And Virtue now is viſibly the moſt enriching purchaſe, and by much the beſt bargain. That ſhe is the perfection and excellency of our Nature; That ſhe is her ſelf a Reward, and will recommend our Names to future Ages, is not all that can now be ſaid for her. 'Tis not ſtrange that the learned Heathens ſatisfied not many with ſuch airy commendations. It has another reliſh and efficacy, to perſwade Men that if they live well here, they ſhall be happy hereafter. Open their Eyes upon the endleſs unſpeakable joys of another Life; And their Hearts will find ſomething ſolid and powerful to move them. The view of Heaven and Hell, will caſt a ſlight upon the ſhort pleaſures and pains

pains of this preſent ſtate; and give attractions and encouragements to Virtue, which reaſon, and intereſt, and the Care of our ſelves, cannot but allow and prefer. Upon this foundation, and upon this only, Morality ſtands firm, and may defy all competition. This makes it more than a name; A ſubſtantial Good, worth all our aims and endeavours; And thus the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt has delivered it to us.

5. To theſe I muſt add one advantage more we have by Jeſus Chriſt, and that is the promiſe of aſſiſtance. If we do what we can, he will give us his Spirit to help us to do what, and how we ſhould. 'Twill be idle for us, who know not how our own Spirits move and act us, to ask in what manner the Spirit of God ſhall work upon us. The Wiſdom that accompanies that Spirit, knows better than we how we are made, and how to work upon us. If a wiſe Man knows how to prevail on his Child, to bring him to what he deſires; Can we ſuſpect, that the Spirit and Wiſdom of God ſhould fail in it; though we perceive or comprehend not the ways of his Operation? Chriſt has promi-

ſed it, who is faithful and juſt; And we cannot doubt of the Performance. 'Tis not requiſite on this occaſion, for the inhancing of this benefit, to enlarge on the frailty of our Minds, and weakneſs of our Conſtitutions; How liable to miſtakes, how apt to go aſtray, and how eaſily to be turned out of the paths of Virtue. If any one needs go beyond himſelf, and the teſtimony of his own Conſcience in this point; If he feels not his own errors and paſſions always tempting, and often prevailing, againſt the ſtrict Rules of his Duty; He need but look abroad into any Age of the World to be convinced. To a Man under the difficulties of his Nature, beſet with Temptations, and hedged in with prevailing Cuſtom; 'tis no ſmall encouragement to ſet himſelf ſeriouſly on the courſes of Virtue, and practiſe of true Religion, That he is from a ſure hand, and an almighty arm, promiſed aſſiſtance to ſupport and carry him through.

There remains yet ſomething to be ſaid to thoſe who will be ready to Object, If the belief of Jeſus of *Nazareth* to be the *Meſſiah*, together with thoſe concomitant

concomitant Articles of his Reſurrection, Rule, and coming again to Judge the World, be all the Faith required as neceſſary to Juſtification, to what purpoſe were the Epiſtles written; I ſay, if the belief of thoſe many Doctrines contained in them, be not alſo neceſſary to Salvation? And if what is there delivered, a Chriſtian may believe or disbelieve, and yet nevertheleſs be a Member of Chriſt's Church, and one of the Faithful?

To this I Anſwer, That the Epiſtles were written upon ſeveral occaſions: And he that will read them as he ought, muſt obſerve what 'tis in them is principally aimed at; find what is the Argument in hand, and how managed; if he will underſtand them right, and profit by them. The obſerving of this will beſt help us to the true meaning and mind of the Writer: For that is the Truth which is to be received and believed; And not ſcattered Sentences in Scripture-Language, accommodated to our Notions and Prejudices. We muſt look into the drift of the Diſcourſe, obſerve the coherence and connexion of the Parts, and ſee how it is conſiſtent with it ſelf, and other parts of Scripture; if we will con-

ceive it right. We muſt not cull out, as beſt ſuits our Syſtem, here and there a Period or a Verſe; as if they were all diſtinct and independent Aphoriſms; and make theſe the Fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, and neceſſary to Salvation, unleſs God has made them ſo. There be many Truths in the Bible, which a good Chriſtian may be wholly ignorant of, and ſo not believe; which, perhaps, ſome lay great ſtreſs on, and call Fundamental Articles, becauſe they are the diſtinguiſhing Points of their Communion. The Epiſtles, moſt of them, carry on a Thread of Argument, which in the ſtile they are writ, cannot every where be obſerved without great Attention. And to conſider the Texts, as they ſtand and bear a part in that, is to view them in their due light, and the way to get the true ſenſe of them. They were writ to thoſe who were in the Faith, and true Chriſtians already: And ſo could not be deſigned to teach them the Fundamental Articles and Points neceſſary to Salvation. The Epiſtle to the *Romans* was writ to all *that were at* Rome, *beloved of God, called to be Saints, whoſe Faith*

Faith was ſpoken of through the World, Chap. I. 7, 8. To whom St. *Paul*'s firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians* was, he ſhews, *Chap* I. 2. 4. *&c. Unto the Church of God which is at* Corinth, *to them that are ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, called to be Saints; with all them that in every place call upon the Name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, both theirs and ours. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jeſus Chriſt; That in every thing ye are enriched by him in all utterance, and in all knowledge: Even as the Teſtimony of Chriſt was confirmed in you. So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And ſo likewiſe the ſecond was, *To the Church of God at* Corinth, *with all the Saints in* Achaia, *Chap.* I. 1. His next is to the *Churches of* Galatia. That to the *Epheſians* was, *To the Saints* that were *at* Epheſus, *and to the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus.* So likewiſe, *To the Saints and faithful Brethren in Chriſt at* Coloſſe, *who had Faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and love to the Saints. To the Church of the* Theſſalonians. *To Timothy* his *Son in the Faith. To Titus* his *own Son after the*

common Faith. To Philemon *his dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer.* And the Author to the *Hebrews* calls thoſe he writes to, *Holy Brethren, partakers of the Heavenly Calling, Chap.* III. 1. From whence it is evident, that all thoſe whom St. *Paul* writ to, were *Brethren, Saints, Faithful* in the *Church*, and ſo *Chriſtians* already; And therefore wanted not the Fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Religion; without a belief of which they could not be ſaved: Nor can it be ſuppoſed, that the ſending of ſuch Fundamentals was the reaſon of the Apoſtle's Writing to any of them. To ſuch alſo St. *Peter* writes, as is plain from the firſt Chapter of each of his Epiſtles. Nor is it hard to obſerve the like in St. *James* and St. *John*'s Epiſtles. And St. *Jude* directs his thus: *To them that are ſanctified by God the Father, and preſerved in Jeſus Chriſt, and called.* The Epiſtles therefore being all written to thoſe who were already Believers and Chriſtians, the occaſion and end of writing them, could not be to Inſtruct them in that which was neceſſary to make them Chriſtians. This 'tis plain they knew and believed already; or

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elſe they could not have been Chriſtians and Believers. And they were writ upon Particular Occaſions; and without thoſe Occaſions had not been writ; and ſo cannot be thought neceſſary to Salvation: Though they reſolving doubts, and reforming miſtakes, are of great Advantage to our Knowledge and Practice. I do not deny, but the great Doctrines of the Chriſtian Faith are dropt here and there, and ſcattered up and down in moſt of them. But 'tis not in the Epiſtles we are to learn what are the Fundamental Articles of Faith, where they are promiſcuouſly, and without diſtinction mixed with other Truths in Diſcourſes that were (though for Edification indeed, yet) only occaſional. We ſhall find and diſcern thoſe great and neceſſary Points beſt in the Preaching of our Saviour and the Apoſtles, to thoſe who were yet ſtrangers, and ignorant of the Faith, to bring them in, and convert them to it. And what that was, we have ſeen already out of the Hiſtory of the Evangeliſts, and the *Acts*; where they are plainly laid down, ſo that no body can miſtake them. The Epiſtles to particular Churches

ches, beſides the main Argument of each of them, (which was ſome preſent Concernment of that particular Church to which they ſeverally were addreſs'd) do in many places explain the Fundamentals of the Chriſtian Religion; and that wiſely; by proper Accommodations to the Apprehenſions of thoſe they were writ to, the better to make them imbibe the Chriſtian Doctrine, and the more eaſily to comprehend the Method, Reaſons, and Grounds of the great work of Salvation. Thus we ſee in the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, Adoption (a Cuſtom well known amongſt thoſe of *Rome*) is much made uſe of, to explain to them the Grace and Favour of God, in giving them Eternal Life; to help them to conceive how they became the Children of God, and to aſſure them of a ſhare in the Kingdom of Heaven, as Heirs to an Inheritance. Whereas the ſetting out, and confirming the Chriſtian Faith to the *Hebrews*, in the Epiſtle to them, is by Alluſions and Arguments, from the Ceremonies, Sacrifices, and Oeconomy of the Jews, and Reference to the Records of the Old Teſtament. And as for the General Epiſtles,

Epiſtles, they, we may ſee, regard the ſtate, and exigencies, and ſome peculiarities of thoſe times. Theſe Holy Writers, inſpired from above, writ nothing but Truth; and in moſt places very weighty Truths to us now; for the expounding, clearing, and confirming of the Chriſtian Doctrine, and eſtabliſhing thoſe in it who had embraced it. But yet every Sentence of theirs muſt not be taken up, and looked on as a Fundamental Article neceſſary to Salvation; without an explicit belief whereof, no body could be a Member of Chriſt's Church here, nor be admitted into his Eternal Kingdom hereafter. If all, or moſt of the Truths declared in the Epiſtles, were to be received and believed as Fundamental Articles, what then became of thoſe Chriſtians who were fallen aſleep? (as St. *Paul* witneſſes in his Firſt to the *Corinthians*, many were) before theſe things in the Epiſtles were revealed to them? Moſt of the Epiſtles not being written till above Twenty Years after our Saviour's Aſcenſion, and ſome after Thirty.

But farther, therefore, to thoſe who will be ready to ſay, May thoſe Truths delivered

delivered in the Epiſtles, which are not contained in the Preaching of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, and are therefore by this Account not neceſſary to Salvation, be believed, or disbelieved without any danger? May a Chriſtian ſafely queſtion or doubt of them?

To this I Anſwer, That the Law of Faith, being a Covenant of Free Grace, God alone can appoint what ſhall be neceſſarily believed by every one whom he will Juſtifie. What is the Faith which he will accept and account for Righteouſneſs, depends wholly on his good Pleaſure. For 'tis of Grace, and not of Right, that this Faith is accepted. And therefore he alone can ſet the Meaſures of it: And what he has ſo appointed and declared, is alone neceſſary. No body can add to theſe Fundamental Articles of Faith; nor make any other neceſſary, but what God himſelf hath made and declared to be ſo. And what theſe are, which God requires of thoſe who will enter into, and receive the Benefits of the New Covenant, has already been ſhewn. An explicit belief of theſe, is abſolutely required of all thoſe to whom the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt

Chriſt is preached, and Salvation through his Name propoſed.

The other parts of Divine Revelation are Objects of Faith, and are ſo to be received. They are Truths whereof none that is once known to be ſuch, may or ought to be disbelieved. For to acknowledge any Propoſition to be of Divine Revelation and Authority, and yet to deny or disbelieve it, is to offend againſt this Fundamental Article and Ground of Faith, that God is true. But yet a great many of the Truths revealed in the Goſpel, every one does, and muſt confeſs, a man may be ignorant of; nay, disbelieve, without danger to his Salvation: As is evident in thoſe, who allowing the Authority, differ in the Interpretation and meaning of ſeveral Texts of Scripture, not thought Fundamental: In all which 'tis plain the contending Parties, on one ſide or tother, are ignorant of, nay, disbelieve the Truths delivered in Holy Writ; unleſs Contrarieties and Contradictions can be contained in the ſame words, and Divine Revelation can mean contrary to it ſelf.

Though

Though all divine Revelation requires the obedience of Faith; yet every truth of inſpired Scriptures is not one of thoſe, that by the Law of Faith is required to be explicitly believed to Juſtification. What thoſe are, we have ſeen by what our Saviour and his Apoſtles propoſed to, and required in thoſe whom they Converted to the Faith. Thoſe are fundamentals; which 'tis not enough not to disbelieve: Every one is required actually to aſſent to them. But any other Propoſition contained in the Scripture, which God has not thus made a neceſſary part of the Law of Faith, (without an actual aſſent to which he will not allow any one to be a Believer) a Man may be ignorant of, without hazarding his Salvation by a defect in his Faith. He believes all that God has made neceſſary for him to believe, and aſſent to: And as for the reſt of Divine Truths, there is nothing more required of him, but that he receive all the parts of Divine Revelation, with a docility and diſpoſition prepared to imbrace, and aſſent to all Truths coming from God; And ſubmit his mind to whatſoever ſhall appear to him to bear

bear that Character. Where he, upon fair endeavours, underſtands it not; How can he avoid being ignorant? And where he cannot put ſeveral Texts, and make them conſiſt together; What Remedy? He muſt either interpret one by the other, or ſuſpend his Opinion. He that thinks that more is, or can be required, of poor frail Man in matters of Faith, will do well to conſider what abſurdities he will run into. God out of the infiniteneſs of his Mercy, has dealt with Man as a compaſſionate and tender Father. He gave him Reaſon, and with it a Law: That could not be otherwiſe than what Reaſon ſhould dictate; Unleſs we ſhould think, that a reaſonable Creature, ſhould have an unreaſonable Law. But conſidering the frailty of Man, apt to run into corruption and miſery, he promiſed a Deliverer, whom in his good time he ſent; And then declared to all Mankind, that whoever would believe him to be the Saviour promiſed, and take him now raiſed from the dead, and conſtituted the Lord and Judge of all Men, to be their King and Ruler, ſhould be ſaved. This is a plain intelligible Propoſition; And

And

And the all-merciful God ſeems herein to have conſulted the poor of this World, and the bulk of Mankind. Theſe are Articles that the labouring and illiterate Man may comprehend. This is a Religion ſuited to vulgar Capacities; And the ſtate of Mankind in this World, deſtined to labour and travel. The Writers and Wranglers in Religion fill it with niceties, and dreſs it up with notions; which they make neceſſary and fundamental parts of it; As if there were no way into the Church, but through the Academy or Lyceum. The bulk of Mankind have not leiſure for Learning and Logick, and ſuperfine diſtinctions of the Schools. Where the hand is uſed to the Plough, and the Spade, the head is ſeldom elevated to ſublime Notions, or exerciſed in myſterious reaſonings. 'Tis well if Men of that rank (to ſay nothing of the other Sex) can comprehend plain propoſitions, and a ſhort reaſoning about things familiar to their Minds, and nearly allied to their daily experience. Go beyond this, and you amaze the greateſt part of Mankind: And may as well talk *Arabick* to a poor day Labourer, as

the

the Notions and Language that the Books and Diſputes of Religion are filled with; and as ſoon you will be underſtood. The Diſſenting Congregations are ſuppoſed by their Teachers to be more accurately inſtructed in matters of Faith, and better to underſtand the Chriſtian Religion, than the vulgar Conformiſts, who are charged with great ignorance; How truly I will not here determine. But I ask them to tell me ſeriouſly, whether half their People have leiſure to ſtudy? Nay, Whether one in ten of thoſe who come to their Meetings in the Country, if they had time to ſtudy them, do or can underſtand, the Controverſies at this time ſo warmly managed amongſt them, about Juſtification, the ſubject of this preſent Treatiſe. I have talked with ſome of their Teachers, who confeſs themſelves not to underſtand the difference in debate between them. And yet the points they ſtand on, are reckoned of ſo great weight, ſo material, ſo fundamental in Religion, that they divide Communion and ſeparate upon them. Had God intended that none but the Learned Scribe, the diſputer or wiſe of this World, ſhould

ſhould be Chriſtians, or be Saved, thus Religion ſhould have been prepared for them; filled with ſpeculations and niceties, obſcure terms, and abſtract notions. But Men of that expectation, Men furniſhed with ſuch acquiſitions, the Apoſtle tells us, *1 Cor. I.* are rather ſhut out from the ſimplicity of the Goſpel; to make way for thoſe poor, ignorant, illiterate, Who heard and believed promiſes of a Deliverer; and believed Jeſus to be him; Who could conceive a Man dead and made alive again, and believe that he ſhould at the end of the World, come again, and paſs Sentence on all Men, according to their deeds. That the poor had the Goſpel Preached to them; Chriſt makes a mark as well as buſineſs of his Miſſion. *Mat.* XI. 5. And if the poor had the Goſpel Preached to them, it was, without doubt, ſuch a Goſpel, as the poor could underſtand, plain and intelligible: And ſo it was, as we have ſeen, in the Preachings of Chriſt and his Apoſtles. *FINIS.*

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